Common Bad Parenting Advice You Should Ignore

Sometimes trusting your instincts is better than trusting the experts. Too often as parents we ignore our gut instincts, and we are duped into following bad advice, the kind of expert advice that has been backed up with faulty research.

Research is often flawed. In years past, the main problem was bias. In modern times, bias it still a problem, but more often problems arise from conflicts of interest. Instead of pursuing objective results, research is commonly twisted to support corporate agendas. Ultimately the scientific method is self-correcting, but this can take a long time. Life is too short to trust the experts and take harmful advice to heart. There is no substitute for doing your own research.

Cry It Out Method

Culture influences science in many ways and so do changes in family structure. In most parts of the world, parents share caretaking with other adult relatives. In America during the late 1800s, extended families were often broken up and the typical American family became a smaller unit. During this transition, new parents had to cope with raising children on their own, a highly independent but unnatural approach to child rearing. This is the cultural backdrop that gave birth to the crying it out method.

It was falsely believed that parents would spoil their children if they were too attentive to their needs. This belief wasn’t based on real evidence, but it was later supported by several poorly conducted studies. This behaviorist view became ubiquitous, and even the government echoed the same advice.

An old U.S. government pamphlet told mothers that babies should never inconvenience adults and that catering to the needs of a baby was a serious waste of time. The goal was to teach a baby as young as 6 months to quietly sit in its crib.

Letting your infant “cry it out” can cause brain damage, actual neurological harm as well as psychological harm. It is not a way to make a child more independent; it makes a child more dependent. By meeting babies’ needs early on, they become much more independent later in life. And interacting with infants is not a waste of time; it is a highly educational and productive activity. Entertaining your baby stimulates their neural development.

Infant Nutritional Advice

From the late 1800s through the 1960s, many pediatricians’ recommendations were either abusive or negligent, depending upon your point of view. As a matter of fact, following their advice today would most likely result in very sick infants, the loss of parental rights, or both.

Sir Frederick Truby King, and Walter W. Sackett were two widely followed “expert” doctors who were champions of bad advice. Sackett’s books are still being sold.

King believed in enforcement parenting. He advocated feeding babies every four hours during the day and never feeding them at night. He recommended placing infants in their own room and leaving them alone in the garden for long hours in order to “toughen them up”. He also firmly believed that cuddling should never be done to excess. Ten minutes a day was his recommended maximum allowance for physical affection. To him, parenting was about routine and discipline, not affection or bonding. Sadly, his advice was widely taken to heart.

Walter Sackett also advocated a four-hour daytime only feeding schedule. By his own admission, this schedule was enacted for

the convenience of the hospital. He recommended the introduction of solid foods for infants who are 2-3 days old beginning with cereal and introducing meat at 14 days. He argued that, “Research has shown that baby’s digestive tract will not be harmed by any food he can swallow.” Of course, modern research refutes this harmful advice. He believed you could give a hungry infant water instead of food. He even recommended giving coffee to six-month-old infants!

Many doctors also recommended formula over breast milk. This recommendation, like so many others, was inspired more by corporate payoffs than by scientific findings.

Obviously, these days we know better. Breast milk is the best food for our babies, and other foods should be introduced one at a time. We recommend starting at the earliest with fruit at six months of age. Foods that are common allergens, such as strawberries, should be delayed. Infant formula should be avoided if at all possible. Many formulas contain GMOs, MSG, and other harmful substances. Even the healthiest infant formula pales in comparison to nature’s super-food, breast milk.

The reason that foods should be delayed at least this long is a baby’s gut is highly permeable. This is known as a virgin gut (in an adult a highly permeable gut is known as leaky gut syndrome). When breast milk seeps through the gut, this is not harmful. Permeability with other foods can result in allergies and other health issues.

Separate Sleeping

It is an American notion that children should be left to sleep in their own room, and if they don’t like it (none of them do), they can just cry themselves to sleep. Throughout most of our history as human beings, and throughout most of the world, infants have always slept with their parents.

WEB MD, American Academy of Pediatrics, and many other medical authorities warn against co-sleeping. Web Med states the following:

> *Sharing the bed with your baby multiplies the risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) fivefold, according to a 2013 study. The American Academy of Pediatrics cites the dangers of SIDS and suffocation, and recommends that parents keep their baby out of their bed, especially during the first 3 months of life.*
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> *Colson encourages room sharing. To lower SIDS risk, follow two rules when you do put your baby down in his crib or bassinet. "The most important thing is that the baby is always put to sleep on his back, and that there isn't anything around the baby like pillows, heavy blankets, or bumpers."*

Many Americans are convinced by their recommendations. In reality, co-sleeping predates SIDS. Before it was known as SIDS it was called crib death, and for good reason. Babies forced to sleep alone (made to sleep in cribs) are more likely to die from the stress, and babies need their mothers in order to take cues for breathing. A breast-fed baby almost never dies of SIDS, and when they do, they are usually well vaccinated and left to sleep alone.

SIDS was so rare prior to 1950 that it isn't even mentioned in the statistics. Mass vaccinations began after the 1950s. . Forcing a baby to sleep alone is an unnatural arrangement for the baby and the mother. Infants who are fed formula, who are forced to sleep alone, and who are well vaccinated run the greatest risk of SIDS. The SIDS rate in America has fallen with the rising popularity of breast feeding, but there is so much more we can do to protect our children.

Dr. James J. Mckenna shares his research on co-sleeping.

…Touching infants changes their breathing, body temperature, growth rate, blood pressure, body temperature, stress levels and growth itself. In other words, the mother's body is the only environment to which the human infant is adapted. As Dr. Winnecott, the famous child psychologist put it, "There is no such thing as a baby, there is a baby and someone.

… sleeping alone in a room by itself and not breastfeeding are now recognized as independent risk factors for SIDS, a fact that explains why most of the world never heard of SIDS.

…the breathing of the mother and infant are regulated by the presence of each other – the sounds of inhalation and exhalation, the rising and falling of their chests, and the carbon dioxide being exhaled by one and inhaled by the other expediting the next breath! I have argued in scientific articles that this is one more signal to remind babies to breathe, a fail-safe system should the baby's internal breathing transitions falter.

…Holding, carrying and sleeping with a baby is not just a nice social idea, but also an important contribution to their well-being."

Many new parents are worried that they will forget their baby is in the bed with them and roll over on them. This is a remote possibility. New parents are ablaze with hormones (both mom and dad) and it is highly unlikely they will forget the presence of their child, even when sleeping. But a poor diet and environmental toxins can disrupt hormones; making this nightmarish scenario more likely. Co-sleeping is not without risk, but leaving the infant to cry it out and just "get over it and self soothe," abandoned and alone in its room, is a more dangerous option. Forcing a baby to sleep alone guarantees some harm to the infant, while co-sleeping carries no guarantee of harm.

Child Protective Services and other similar but differently

named state agencies do not look kindly on co-sleeping. Many parents who co-sleep still have baby rooms set up, with cribs and all, even if they never intend to use them, just in case overzealous social workers show up on an anonymous tip.

A co-sleeping crib or a co-sleeping basinet is a possible middle ground, as long as the baby can maintain physical contact with his/her mother.

Precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of a co-sleeping infant. Falling off the bed onto the floor can be fatal. To prevent this, many co-sleeping parents simply put their mattress on the floor with no frame and no box springs. Other parents pile up pillows around the bed as a way of breaking a baby's fall should they roll off the bed.

Circumcision



Since the 1800s, experts have promoted circumcision as prevention for a laughable list of medical conditions from excessive masturbation to crossed eyes, nervousness, and epilepsy. Dr. John Hutchinson, a dedicated advocate of circumcision in the 1890s, states the following in making his case for genital mutilation.

> *It is surely not needful to seek any recondite motive for the origin of the practice of circumcision. No one who has seen the superior cleanliness of a Hebrew penis can have avoided a very strong impression in favour of removal of the foreskin. It constitutes a harbour for filth, and is a constant source of irritation. It conduces to masturbation, and adds to the difficulties of sexual continence. It increases the risk of syphilis in early life, and of cancer in the aged. I have*

> *never seen cancer of the penis in a Jew, and chances are rare”.*

Circumcision is an unnecessary, painful, traumatizing operation performed on newborn infants that can lead to infection and death.

> *Doctors are highly motivated to conceal the true cause of circumcision death. Neonatal circumcision has no medical indication and is now considered to be an unnecessary non-therapeutic operation. It is unethical to carry out such operations on minors who cannot consent for themselves. Consequently, most doctors who have a baby die after a circumcision would prefer to attribute the results of his unethical operation to secondary causes, such as infection or bleeding, while ignoring the primary cause, which is the circumcision that resulted in the infection or bleeding. It is, therefore, very hard to identify the total number of deaths that occur from circumcision. One senses that one may be seeing only the “tip of the iceberg,” with the vast majority of deaths from circumcision being concealed. The deaths undoubtedly cause an increase in infant mortality. Male infant mortality is higher than female infant mortality. It is not known how much of this increased mortality is due to the practice of male circumcision. CIRP*

Conclusion

Bad parental advice from the experts is undoubtedly still ubiquitous. On many issues such as co-sleeping, experts are divided on what is best for our children. In times past, there often was more of a consensus on what should be done, but this was still no guarantee that the experts were right, not when the prevailing views of experts were to toughen up our children by abandoning them for extended periods of time and not holding them for more than ten minutes a day.

Other controversies concerning parenting still abound, such as whether or not to vaccinate. If you're researching what is best for your child, your research should be thorough. Include a look at what other countries practice to gain a more complete understanding. For example, American children are the most heavily vaccinated in the world, and they are also the most chronically ill.

If an expert says something you agree with or disagree with, investigate further and learn all sides of the argument. All children are unique and each family is unique. Ultimately, we decide what is best for our children. Knowledge is our best defense.

Recommended Reading:

- *Circumcision, the Primal Cut – A Human Rights Violation*
- *How To Detoxify and Heal From Vaccinations – For Adults and Children*
- *Five Things You Can Do to Help Your Child Manage ADHD Naturally*
- *Children, Cell Phones & Health*
- *Surprise, Surprise: Soft Drinks Cause Behavioral Problems in Young Children, Research Proves*

Sources:

- *Dangers of "Crying it Out"* – Psychology Today
- *Six childcare gurus who have changed parenting* – BBC News
- *Bringing up babies; a family doctor's practical approach to child care.* – Walter W. Sackett.
- *Co-Sleeping With Your Baby Is Risky* – Web MD
- *My Conversation With Co-Sleeping Expert James McKenna* – Huffington Post
- *Hutchinson on Circumcision* -History of Circumcision
- *Circumcision Deaths* – CIRP