

Your fun and easy guide to raising children
—written by parents for parents!

Parenting FOR DUMMIES®

2nd Edition

**Sandra Hardin
Gookin
Dan Gookin**

Bestselling authors

*Mary Jo Shaw, MD, and Tim Cavell,
PhD, Contributing Editors*

A Reference for the Rest of Us!®



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WILEY

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Parenting For Dummies®, 2nd Edition

Published by

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

111 River Street

Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774

www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2007 by Wiley Publishing, Inc.,
Indianapolis, Indiana

Published by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana

Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2006927652

ISBN 978-0-7645-5418-6

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6

2B/RV/QS/QX/IN



About the Authors

Sandra Hardin Gookin is the mother of four boys. She holds a degree in speech communications from Oklahoma State University, and her background in communications has been the basis for her theories on parenting. That, plus lots of experience in parenting methods that not only work but are painless.

Sandy also is an accomplished computer book author. She has written such books as *Windows XP Home Edition*, *I Didn't Know You Could Do That*, and *PCs For Dummies Quick Reference*. When Sandy isn't busy writing and parenting, she's an actress and theater director.

Dan Gookin has written more than 75 books about computers, and his works have been translated into 34 languages. Dan wrote the first "For Dummies" book (and many after that), so the light, humorous, and informative style of "For Dummies" books is Dan's style. His most recent titles include *PCs For Dummies, 8th Edition* and *Naked Windows XP*.

Dan and Sandy currently live with their several boys in the as-yet-untamed state of Idaho.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to our four boys, Jordan, Simon, Jonah, and Jeremiah. Thank you for being the subject of inspection and prodding and poking and just a whole lot of fun. You make life worth living and you turn every day into an adventure.

Author's Acknowledgments

It takes a lot of people to make a book. People you wouldn't even know about, such as my parents; thank you Mom and Dad for helping with the kids when I had to lock myself in my office to get this book done so Norm, my editor, wouldn't yell at me. Thank you also to contributing editors, Dr. Tim Cavell and Dr. Mary Jo Shaw. Your brilliance in your fields of expertise was very much appreciated.

Special thanks to Matt Wagner, my literary agent, for pushing this book through to its second edition. I am grateful for your persistence and patience.

And thank you to Norm Crampton, Editor Supreme, and Neil Johnson, my copy editor, for their ability to make me look smarter than I really am.

There are many people who contributed to this book whose names I don't know — parents I've observed who were wonderful and kind to their kids and who gave me inspiration. I thank you all.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register/.

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

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Copy Editor: Neil Johnson

Technical Editors: Beth Ann Martin, MD; Timothy Cavell, PhD

Editorial Manager: Christine Beck

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Cover Photos: © IT Int'l/eStock Photography/Picture Quest

Composition Services

Project Coordinator: Erin Smith

Layout and Graphics: Stephanie D. Jumper, Jackie Nicholas, Jeremy Unger, Mary J. Virgin, Erin Zeltner

Proofreaders: Laura Albert, John Greenough, Andy Hollandbeck, Linda Quigley, Aptara

Indexer: Aptara

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Introduction

Welcome to Parenting For Dummies

- ✓ I want you to learn how to develop a good relationship with your kids. I don't want you to get so wrapped up in being a "parent" that you forget that the little tyke who just spilled flour all over the floor is someone who has the same wants and desires about the way he is treated as you do.
- ✓ I want you to learn what invalidating your child's feelings is like. Saying, "Get up, you're not hurt" is telling your child that you don't believe what she is telling you.
- ✓ I want to help you to stop all the parenting sins you were taught by your parents.
- ✓ I hope your baby grows up to be a very old person someday because you were smart enough to believe all the safety warnings out there and that you didn't fall into that category of, "Oh, that'll never happen to me."

Of course, I'm hoping that you get even more from this book. More than anything, I hope that you'll embrace your job as parent with open arms and realize what a gift and honor it is to be one of the fortunate few who really do understand that your job is the most important job in the world.

About This Book

This book was written with the sincere desire to coax you to look at parenting in a way that's different from the way you may have been raised. In this book, a big emphasis is placed on communications and on developing a relationship with your child. But plenty of health and safety issues also are covered. I've tried to weed out the psychological hype and medical terminology, but you may find that I've had to include it from time to time. And, I've tried to limit the number of sappy stories about my own kids (although I have thrown in a few).

As with most *For Dummies* books, this one isn't meant to be read from front to back, although it would please me tremendously if you read the entire thing from cover to cover. Although age-specific information is included for newborns and toddlers, this book is considered more of a reference for people who work with children of all ages. Each chapter has self-contained information about parenting. You don't have to read the entire book to understand what's going on; just go to the chapter and section that interests you.

You won't learn the history of potty training in this book, or the psychological effects of bottlefeeding versus breast-feeding. But you will be equipped with excellent guidelines and helpful hints about getting your kids to bed, finding a good doctor, and making your home as safe as it can be. You know — practical stuff. The

examples you'll read in this book have really happened to our family. Why would you want to read a book on parenting from people who haven't ever really parented?

Foolish Assumptions

The only assumption made in this book is that you have kids, are going to have kids, would like to have kids, know somebody who has kids, live next to somebody who has kids, or were, yourself, once a kid. Whatever the subject is when dealing with children, this is your reference.

For ourselves, you may notice that two people are listed on the cover. That's right, we're married, and we have four children (ages 7, 8, 9, and 15). So the information in the book has been practiced in real-world situations. It really works.

How This Book Is Organized

This book has seven major parts and 30 chapters. Inside each chapter are subsections that apply to the topic at hand. Even though this book is arranged so that you can pick it up and start reading from any point, this is how it reads from front to back:

Part I: The Basic Stuff You Must Know

This first section is the backbone of the whole parenting topic. It contains information about how to be consistent, follow through with your actions, and interact with your children — the basic, important stuff. There's also a very important section on co-parenting.

Part II: Dealing with Babies

Babies are in a class by themselves, so they deserve their own special section (which we would have written in gender-neutral yellow, had we thought of it sooner). Breast-feeding and diapers and drooling and health concerns are all a little different for babies

Part III: Serving Your Child's Physical Needs

This part of the book starts getting into parenting topics like food and nutrition, bathtime, bedtime, and the dreaded potty training.

Part IV: Seeing to Your Child's Health and Safety

Safety! Nothing is more important than being organized and prepared for safety issues in your home and safety issues with childcare. This section also includes health issues such as finding a good doctor and living with dangerous elements like heat and cold.

Part V: Developing a Good Person

Your child wants to be treated with respect and like an individual human. That's tougher than it may seem. If it were easy, parents would be doing it all the time. So I've dedicated a section on communication and interaction with your child. The sensitive subject of punishment and discipline also is addressed.