



## Book Review for Cleveland Psychoanalytic Center Blog, By Ms. Joanne Naegele, MA, LPCC-S\*

The book, Timeless Advice for Parents of Young Children (2018), out of the Hanna Perkins Center, is worth noting. Written by the “Grandmothers of Hanna Perkins Center,” namely Kathy Baker, Maria Kaiser, Georgianna Roberts & Ginny Steininger, in consultation with child psychoanalyst, Barbara Streeter, the book offers sixty brief articles on how to understand and help behaviors of young children. It is sort of a “self-help” book for parents with reminders that behaviors of two, three and four-year-olds can be understood and addressed without going “out of your mind.” Pictures illustrate each title of a chapter. For example, “Baby and Toddler Fears” has a drawing of a small child, hands over ears, curled up in a chair, obviously hiding from the offensive sound, while mom vacuums.

Written from the experience of these early childhood educators who have

raised children themselves, been teachers and directors in pre schools and child care centers, their focus is on the emotional well-being of the very young. They remind the reader that there is a “loving, nurturing, patient and resourceful parent that lives in all of us.” This is easy to forget in the “heat of the moment.” They speak of times when being a parent is hard. They know that being a child is hard too: “kids are not short adults.” They say that self-esteem cannot be purchased by empty words. It must be nurtured by an invested, caring parent. They remind us that a child crawls before he/she can walk, and there are no “do-overs” for childhood, so don’t be rushing your kids through theirs.

The book has a dedication: “To Lainie Hadden, who believed in us enough to make us think we could write a book.” Lainie is, of course, the “angel” of Hanna Perkins.

Know in advance that chapters are short, no more than two or three pages, good for a quick read. They are topic oriented and inviting, such as the one entitled, “Whining and Complaining.” Thoughts are offered in an open way, such as the following:

“When whining is a reaction to the helpless ‘little’ feeling that overtakes the child when he feels left out, he is letting you know how miserable he is...No matter what the cause of the present struggle, the first step is to re-establish connection with the child. The most immediate and effective method is a hug or a protective arm around her...tell her that you know that she is unhappy and that you will help her figure out how both of you can feel better.” (pg. 4)

Here’s an example from the chapter, “Talking to Kids about Sex.” They cite,

“Timeless Truth No.4: Looking doesn’t help but talking does,” (pg. 32), with a follow up example:

“If he barges in on you in the shower or starts playing ‘doctor’ with his playmates, trying to get a better view of people with their clothes off, get everyone’s clothes back on and say, ‘You must have some questions’ and encourage him to ask them.”

This little volume encourages creative thinking in young parents with the idea of mastering the challenges of parenting in a positive way. It conveys hope, especially if a parent has access to the child within themselves. It represents a kind of mantra: “Been there, done that, I can remember!” It’s a wish to “do better.” This can be accomplished.

In Cleveland this volume is available at local bookstores; Loganberry Books on Larchmere, Appletree Books in Cleveland Heights, Mac’s Backs Books on Coventry and at the Cleveland Heights Library. Nationwide, find it on Amazon.com.

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