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Parenting, Inc.: How the Billion-Dollar Baby Business Has Changed the Way We Raise Our Children

Pamela Paul

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"An entire industry preys on parental anxiety [and] Paul tries to lead us out of the catastrophization of childhood."
—THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW



Parenting, Inc.

How the Billion-Dollar Baby Business
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#1945785 in Books Pamela Paul 2009-03-31 2009-03-31 Original language: English PDF # 1 228.60 x .72 x 6.00l, 1.05 #File Name: 0805089241320 pages Parenting Inc How the Billion Dollar Baby Business Has Changed the Way We Raise Our Children | File size: 32.Mb

Pamela Paul : Parenting, Inc.: How the Billion-Dollar Baby Business Has Changed the Way We Raise Our Children before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Parenting, Inc.: How the Billion-Dollar Baby Business Has Changed the Way We Raise Our Children:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Enjoyable read
By Celine Derudder... One you will be able to quote at dinners to other flabbergasted parents and probably start some enjoyable debates as well. The subtitle says it all really. The author investigates the countless ways in which today's marketeers or entrepreneurs sell baby toiletries, design clothes, classes, DVDs, etc. by preying on parents' vulnerabilities and feelings of guilt, competitiveness or inadequacy. There is also some nuance though, as some of the initiatives are described as good ideas; it's the overall idea that we need to spend, spend, spend on our kids that the author condemns. The structure is sound - she switches topics seamlessly - and the content interesting, if not very in-depth. It reads more like a very long magazine article. As another reviewer pointed out, the analysis is kind of skimmed over, and some arguments are on the light side (mind you, the "that was good enough for us as we grew up" is not the author's view but a quote from a shop employee). All in all, a good read. The Kindle edition could definitely do with some editing as typos were rampant!
10 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A true look into the crazy baby industry
By LizzyBee This is one of the only baby books that I read while pregnant. It really helped me look at the baby industry with a clear head. I had always thought that half the things they market to mothers were garbage and this book helped to confirm my original thinking. When I went to register at Babies R Us, some of the chapters in this book kept coming back to me. Even if I hadn't been pregnant, I think I still would have enjoyed this book and hearing about the baby industry. Fantastic quick read.
11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Sobering look at raising kids
By S. D. Haltzman Pamela Paul, who has written lucidly and piercingly about other issues in American culture, here examines the money and mentality of raising children. She begins by discussing baby sign language, and, right away I thought about the choices I made for my children. I never did get around to teaching my kids sign language, I didn't buy the most expensive cribs or cradles. Did I screw up?? Did I damage my children? Paul reassures me that, no, my kids will do just fine, thank you. This book is interesting from a sociologic perspective. But it's also practical. I think that any new parent (or parent of a pregnant child) should read it to get a clearer vision on what children "must" have, and what children truly need. The bottom line: children need more of what money can't buy. And if you spend less time going out to earn the money, maybe you'll be home more to give your kids what they need: you!

"An entire industry preys on parental anxiety . . . Paul tries to lead us out of the catastrophization of childhood." The New York Times Book Review
Parenting coaches, ergonomic strollers, music classes, sleep consultants, luxury diaper creams, a never-ending rotation of DVDs that will make a baby smarter, socially adept, and bilingual before age three. Time-strapped, anxious parents hoping to provide the best for their baby are the perfect mark for the "parenting" industry. In *Parenting, Inc.*, Pamela Paul investigates the whirligig of marketing hype, peer pressure, and easy consumerism that spins parents into purchasing overpriced products and raising overprotected, overstimulated, and over-provided-for children. Paul shows how the parenting industry has persuaded parents that they cannot trust their children's health, happiness, and success to themselves. She offers a behind-the-scenes look at the baby business so that any parent can decode the claims and discover shockingly useless products and surprisingly effective services. Paul's book leads the way for every parent who wants to escape the spiral of fear, guilt, competition, and consumption that characterizes modern American parenthood.

From Publishers Weekly
Paul (*Pornified: How Pornography Is Damaging Our Lives, Our Relationships, and Our Families*), mother of two, probes the business of parenting, exposing the high price of raising kids in our consumer-driven nation. Paul points out that it costs upwards of a million dollars to raise a child in the U.S. these days, especially if one buys into the theory that baby must have everything on the market. Following the money, Paul dissects the booming baby business, including smart toys that don't really make kids smarter, themed baby showers and parenting coaches and consultants. The text is a tireless rundown of parents' seemingly bottomless pocketbooks when it comes to bringing up baby, and according to Paul this is not just an upscale, cosmopolitan phenomenon throughout the country parents are reaching deep into their pockets to fuel this spiraling craze. Though Paul incorporates the pithy quotes of a number of experts, such as psychologist David Elkind's observation, "Computers are part of our environment, but so are microwaves and we don't put them in cribs," readers may find themselves wishing for more commentary and less litany. But Paul isn't preachy, although she does reveal that what babies really need is holding, singing, dancing, conversation and outdoor play. (Apr.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
An entire industry preys on parental anxiety Paul nicely dismantles the claim [and] tries to lead us out of the catastrophization of childhood. The New York Times Book Fascinating Paul shows how companies selling everything from infant movement monitors to education DVDs have built a booming business convincing parents they cannot trust their children's safety or well-being to themselves. Reuters
[Parenting, Inc.] offers the reader a distilled version of the parenting products and services that are truly useful, as opposed to those that prey on our fears. *Cookie* magazine Paul has cleverly identified this subset of our consumer culture run wild... Perform[s] a useful service, debunking the most absurd of the baby-marketers' claims. New York Observer Sing it, sister Pamela! At last, a baby-book trend even a father can dig. The Globe and Mail (Toronto) An absorbing examination of the commercialization of parenting. The Guardian (London) Through interviews... Paul helps consumers figure out for themselves just what

items they need and which ones are a complete waste of money. Her book is part investigative journey, part resource manual. The Post and Courier (Charleston, S.C.)Paul... looks closely at the nonstop spending spree associated with parenting (designer shoes for newborns, anyone?) and offers a sobering critique of the combined industries she dubs 'Big Baby'. Time Out New York KidsPaul's journey through the maze [of marketing] is frightening and, frankly, a bit embarrassing. Her conclusions champion restraint. Courier-Journal (Louisville)A meticulously researched piece of cultural criticism Parenting, Inc. just might reassure [parents]. St. Petersburg TimesBefore you plunk down forty bucks for a Christian Dior pacifier, think about Paul's warning about a consumer-driven culture that's raising over-protected, over-stimulated, and over-provided-for children. CNBC Business RadioPaul took a hard look at the parenting industry' and found that not only are the companies creating and marketing these products actively play on parental fears, but we parents have readily bought into the hype. The Greenville NewsLike Judith Warner's Perfect Madness, this sine qua non for new parents is highly recommended. Library JournalPaul explains just how ludicrous today's infant product marketplace has become. The Ottawa CitizenIt's only natural to want the best for our kids; all parents do. But what does the best' mean? Pamela Paul takes us on a hair-raising journey of the products, services, and expert' guidance from which parents today feel compelled to choose and the time pressure, financial pressure, and self-doubt that turns them into nervous wrecks. Parents need the courage to be sensible again--they and their kids can use it. Buy this book and carry it with you whenever you walk into a baby store. Barry Schwartz, author of The Paradox of ChoiceYou don't have a Crumb Chum chin-to-toe cover to put on your toddler at meal times? You haven't hired your momcierge' to organize your child's home library? Or a specialist in thumb sucking, under-sleeping, nail biting, or giving up overnight diapers? Relax. In this riveting book, Paul very much empathizes with the anxieties of eager parents. At the same time, she gently helps us wonder whether we aren't, as a culture, going overboard--and deftly, brilliantly, helps us see the beauty in an alternative. She rings a bell we need to hear. Arlie Hochschild, author of The Time Bind and The Managed HeartThere has been a great deal written about the commercialization of childhood, but Parenting, Inc. makes it clear that the commercialization of parenting is equally extensive and even more troubling. This important book will help parents become aware of how much of their parenting is being forced upon them by an unrelenting sales pitch. David Elkind, professor of child development, Tufts University, and author of The Hurried ChildAbout the AuthorPamela Paul is the author of Pornified: How Pornography Is Damaging Our Lives, Our Relationships, and Our Families and The Starter Marriage and the Future of Matrimony. A frequent contributor to Time and The New York Times, she has also written for The Washington Post, Slate, Psychology Today, Redbook, Self, Ladies' Home Journal, and The Economist. She and her family live in New York.