

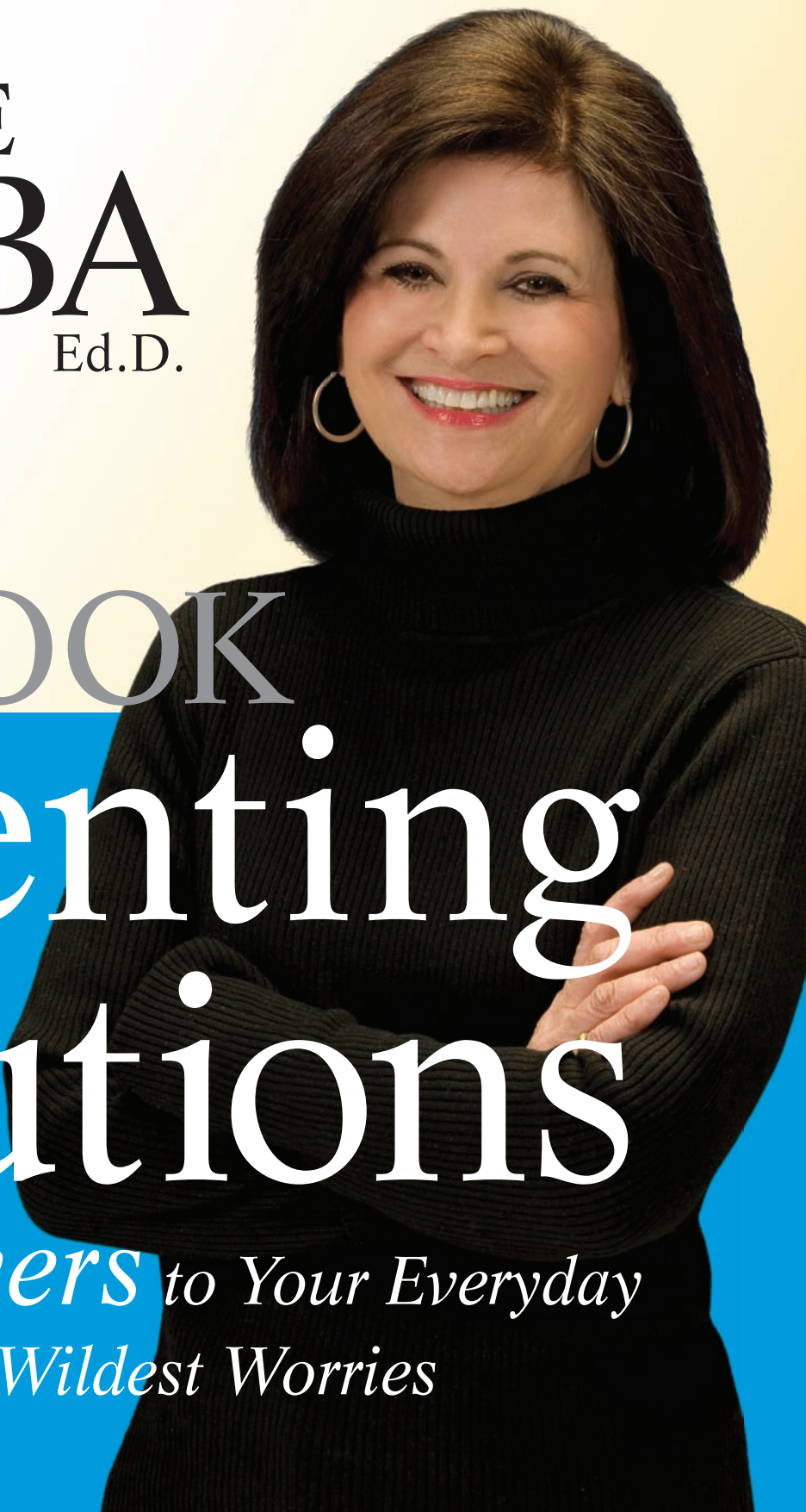
As Seen on the TODAY Show

MICHELE
BORBA
Ed.D.

The Only
Parenting Book
You'll Ever Need
For Kids from
3-13

The
BIG BOOK
of
Parenting
Solutions

*101 Answers to Your Everyday
Challenges and Wildest Worries*



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“A practical, easy-to-read guide, full of great examples to help mothers teach their children the skills that will eventually be invaluable for great success and happiness in college.”

—**Richard Kadison, M.D.**, chief, Mental Health Service, Harvard University Health Services

“I hope this book finds its way into homes all across the country. I know that the strategies, ideas, and activities it provides can make a tremendous difference in the lives of our children.”

—**Thomas Armstrong**, author, *Awakening Your Child’s Natural Genius* and *In Their Own Way*

“I appreciate the message that this book champions and the guidance it provides to mothers struggling to foster a brighter future for their children.”

—**Mary Bono Mack**, member of Congress, California’s 45th District

“This smart and helpful book integrates much of what we know about raising moral children.”

—**William Damon**, professor and director, Stanford University Center on Adolescence

“A revolutionary, wonderful, and welcome answer to a mother’s prayers. Michele Borba has shown us all how to be loving moms who raise great kids, without losing our peace of mind, our lives as adults, or our true selves.”

—**Phyllis George**, former Miss America, pioneer female sportscaster, former first lady of Kentucky, and mother

“While many people in public life decry the lack of character and moral development among our kids, few take this concern further, into the realm of practical steps to address the issue in the lives of real children and youth. Michele Borba has done so in her book *Building Moral Intelligence*.”

—**James Garbarino**, author, *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them*

“Every reader of this book is sure to have an ah-ha! moment and rediscover the simple joys of parenting.”

—**Peggy Fleming Jenkins**, 1968 Olympic champion and ABC sports commentator

“Michele Borba articulates the core traits that build and promote responsible citizenship among the young and old alike. Her book is a must-read for parents, educators, and community leaders.”

—**Ronald D. Stephens**, executive director, National School Safety Center

“A must-read, user-friendly collection of stories, facts, and practical suggestions that will help parents who want their children to become competent, confident, and contributing adults.”

—**Jane Bluestein**, author, *Parents, Teens and Boundaries* and *The Parent’s Little Book of Lists: Dos and Don’ts of Effective Parenting*

“Michele Borba has done it again—she’s written another must-have, must-read book! I highly recommend this book to anyone who cares about kids.”

—**Hanoch McCarty**, coeditor, *A 4th Course of Chicken Soup for the Soul®* and coauthor, *Acts of Kindness*

THE BIG BOOK OF PARENTING SOLUTIONS

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101 Answers to Your Everyday
Challenges and Wildest Worries

Michele Borba, Ed.D.

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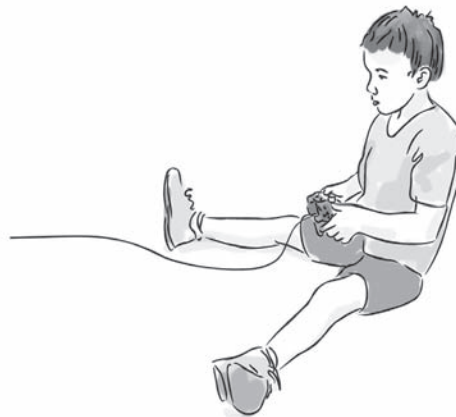
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*With love to my father, Daniel Ungaro, who instilled
in me the love of writing and research, and the belief
that a misbehaving child is discouraged and really
needs a caring adult to show a different way*

Note to the Reader

All the examples in this book are based on cases of children and their families with whom I have worked over the last years or gathered from my actual observations. A few stories are composite cases of children I have treated. All e-mails are personal queries received in my iVillage blog, Parenting Solutions, or posted on my Web site, micheleborba.com. I also presented many of these solutions in over seventy parenting segments as contributor for NBC's *Today* show.

As the mother of three boys, I have a natural tendency to overuse the male gender in my examples, so in the interests of maintaining a reasonable gender balance throughout the book, I have somewhat arbitrarily alternated the gender between topics, boy-girl, boy-girl. However, some issues—such as cliques and video gaming—do tend to be gender specific; these circumstances obviate against a strict alternation of the genders within each part of the book. Overall, however, the number of entries using the male gender is equal to the number using the female.

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Countless people have helped shape my writing and philosophy and the scope of my work in child development over the past few decades. I could never have written this book without their help. I'm sure many are not even aware of just how great their influence has been. To all I extend profound appreciation. In particular . . .

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Alosi, Murf Ryan, Tom Lickona, and Hal Urban for their unending support and prayers (they worked!) and to Ester Khubyar, an extraordinary woman who I chanced to meet for no more than three minutes and who became my guardian angel, helping me get through those days with her astonishing acts of kindness. Finally, to the incredible guys of the 187th 3rd platoon: bless you, thank you, and stay safe.

Introduction

From June Cleaver to Desperate Housewives— How Did We Get Ourselves into This Mess?

Your six-year-old and his pal are playing the video game Conker's Bad Fur Day about a cute little squirrel. Your kid begged for it, so you gave in. But now you're horrified: the sweet little squirrel is getting drunk at a bar, throwing up, and then blacking out, swearing profusely all the while.

The pediatrician begins, "I'm concerned that your daughter is anorexic." This must be a mistake, you think. She's only eight, but deep down you know the doctor is only confirming what you've suspected for some time.

Your twelve-year-old barrels into the kitchen. "Sorry I'm late, Mom," she begins. "Some eighth grader threatened to kill the teachers because he flunked a test. And he even had a gun! Can you imagine?" No, you can't imagine at all.

Ah, the joys of raising our next generation! Frankly, I can't imagine any other job that is more challenging and rewarding, frustrating and joyous than parenting. It's perhaps the most significant role we'll ever have (we're talking about raising a human being, for Pete's sake) and also the only one that doesn't require a single credential. And it's the kind of job that you can finally sort of figure out how to do right—by the time you're done. From the everyday challenges like getting your kids to brush their teeth, say "please," or make their beds, to the more worrisome issues, such as drinking, sexual promiscuity, or eating disorders, raising kids has never been easy. But many people feel that it has gotten harder over the last few years.

In a recent poll, 76 percent of the respondents said they felt that parenting is getting much tougher and that it is far more difficult to parent now than when they grew up. You probably won't get an argument with most folks on that one, but here is a statistic of greater concern: about 60 percent of adults also feel that today's parents are not measuring up to the standards set just a generation ago.¹ In fact, most Americans feel that moms are doing *a far worse* job than their own mothers did just twenty or thirty years ago. (If I haven't hit a nerve so far, this next one should do it.) What's more, the majority of moms and dads today agree with their low performance ratings and feel that they've been unsuccessful in their parenting endeavors.²

But the situation gets even more troubling: many parents confess that they aren't even enjoying their kids! One-third of the parents in one survey said that if they were to do it all over again, they would *not* start a family.³ For the past few decades, I have watched this troubling parenting trend unfold, and I have to tell you that I'm greatly concerned about the state of the American family.

I've spent my professional life in the field of child development, and all those varied experiences helped form my beliefs. I earned a doctorate in educational counseling and psychology and a master's degree in learning disabilities. I have taught emotionally and physically challenged kids and kids with learning disabilities; I have also taught gifted and talented students, and briefly had a private practice for troubled kids. I've worked as a consultant in hundreds of schools and organizations around the globe, spoken to thousands of parents at workshops, personally worked with scores of kids, wrote a number of parenting books, and raised three great sons (spoken like a proud mom and by far my best training). Through those years, I focused on infants through tweens.

Then I became a contributor to NBC's *Today* show, and I suddenly gained a whole new perspective that dramatically stretched my views. The topics I was asked to report on often dealt with tough, news-breaking issues facing adolescents, such as depression, stress, sex, and risky teen behaviors. Preparing for each segment (over seventy at this point) allowed me an incredible opportunity to comb stacks of new research. What I saw was a very troubling trend in the lives of American kids: they were having problems coping, bouncing back, and handling life—particularly as they left home and had to fend for themselves.

One segment confirmed it all. I was on the *Today* set with Meredith Viera. It was December, and students who had finished their first college semester were coming home for the Christmas and New Year's break. I was there to warn parents that new research showed that more than 50 percent of freshman college students felt so depressed that it was difficult for them to function.⁴ Suicide rates were soaring—in just that one year alone, there was a 114 percent spike among adolescents, girls in particular. Counselors predicted many freshmen would never graduate because their mental health needs were so severe. Ironically this was the same group that experts said had the closest relationship with their parents: much loved, indulged, coddled, and unable to deal with life independently.

That was my "aha" moment: how these young people had been parented hadn't done them any favors. Each additional *Today* segment I did showed the same troubling trends: stress rising, risky behaviors increasing, peer pressure and bullying skyrocketing. Something was amiss in American Kidsville. But it turned out that parents' weren't fairing well either.

NBC asked me to be a parenting contributor for the iVillage online community and write a blog called Dr. Borba's Parenting Solutions. I've since posted dozens of articles and also received scores of e-mails from moms seeking advice. But there was a clearly discernible difference between these queries and those I had received in the past. These mothers were more stressed and worried—even overwhelmed. They were trying so hard.

Wanting so for their kids to be happy and successful. Their love and intentions were there, but they were also *doing* so much for their kids that they were forgetting to take care of themselves.

What I saw over and over was a lack of confidence in their mothering. These moms were always second-guessing themselves and seemed to spend a lot of time comparing themselves and their kids with other moms. Around the same time, I reported results from a *Parenting* magazine survey on the *Today* show, and it was déjà vu. In that survey, 96 percent of mothers admitted feeling stressed; 73 percent felt that yesterday's moms had it easier; and 67 percent felt that yesterday's mothers were happier.⁵

Don't get me wrong: we clearly are doing some things right. For starters, today's children are smarter. Their IQ scores are even increasing.⁶ (Really!) All those extra tutors and pricey extracurricular activities seem to be paying off (by the way, American kids are now the most scheduled in the world⁷), but at a stiff price. By all benchmarks, today's children are sadder,⁸ more materialistic,⁹ narcissistic,¹⁰ anxious,¹¹ stressed,¹² disrespectful,¹³ and ill behaved; and poorly prepared to cope with life.¹⁴ And that's just for starters.

Deep down I think most parents realize that their kids aren't turning out as well as they'd dreamed. It's a big reason why many feel so darn guilty and stressed out and are just not enjoying their family life. It's also why so many lack confidence in their job performance and are turning to others for reassurance and pointers on parenting. (We'll get to those a bit later.) But for now let's explore how we got ourselves into such a sorry state—what's causing the breakdown of our children's mental health, behavior, and character, and the rise of our own stress, the lack of confidence in our parenting abilities, and our unhappiness in our role.

THE PROBLEMS WITH MOST MODERN-DAY PARENTING APPROACHES

Over the last few decades, there has been a major change in how we raise our kids, and the descriptions of modern-day parenting are far from flattering. Try these for starters: helicopter parenting, incubator parenting, snowplowing, paranoid parenting, hyperparenting, and accessory parenting. I can't help but envision kids on their knees praying for someone to stop the insanity. In just a matter of a few decades, we've morphed ourselves from Marion Cunningham of *Happy Days* to characters in *Desperate Housewives*. No wonder Judith Warner called modern motherhood "perfect madness."¹⁵

In all fairness, our more frantic, super-octane-charged mode is at least partly due to today's culture. June Cleaver or Carol Brady didn't have to deal with such hair-raising issues as cyberbullying, school shootings, online predators, and Facebook when they raised their broods. Nor would Clair Huxtable or Laura Petrie have read any parenting book including such serious issues as school-age children's eating disorders, depression, and worrying about the world. But let's get beyond the culture for a minute, because that

isn't the only thing that has changed. We're also raising our kids differently, and our new approaches aren't doing them any favors. In fact, many of these approaches contradict over fifty years of solid research that shows what kids really do need for solid character, emotional health, and fulfillment. Several modern-day child-rearing approaches are so toxic to effective parenting that I call them the Seven Deadly Parenting Styles. I am convinced that using them is a big part of why we're so darn dissatisfied, stressed out, and lacking confidence in our parenting.

THE SEVEN DEADLY PARENTING STYLES

Take a minute to review each style and be brutally honest. Might any of these be what you're using as a parenting approach? If so, here is a crucial point to know: *before you can change your child, you must first change how you respond to your child.* Might your parenting approach need altering first?

Deadly Style 1: Helicopter Parenting

Hovering over your kids, hurrying to smooth every one of life's bumps

It's a bird . . . it's a plane . . . it's a helicopter parent!¹⁶ These parents constantly hover, and stop at next to nothing when it concerns their kids. They finish their homework, do and redo those science projects, and make sure their kids have every advantage. After all, they've invested too much energy into parenting; nothing should stand in the way of their kids' success. And if it does, watch out. Helicopter parents go into Black Hawk mode, swooping in for the rescue and solving each and every problem.

But all that parental involvement can backfire. This style can keep kids in a perpetual state of dependency through adulthood, leaving them unprepared to handle the many curve balls that life is sure to throw at them. If you've always been rescued or micromanaged, you may have had too little practice in developing such critical life skills as self-reliance, decision making, and problem solving. It's why large numbers of "copter kids" often suffer from what has been called "problem-solving deficit disorder"¹⁷ and have trouble developing confidence in their own capabilities and coping out there in the real world.

The Change to Parent For Learn to be involved but not intrusive in your child's life so that she develops a healthy sense of independence and can cope someday without you.

Deadly Style 2: Incubator "Hothouse" Parenting

Pushing your kids into learning earlier than appropriate for their cognitive age and developmental level

There's nothing new about parents wanting their children to excel, but these days their quest is all about raising the Superkid (aka "a mentally superior child").¹⁸ Hothouse parents start in early: piping classical music into the nursery, using flash cards and Baby Einstein tapes (which have *no* proven value) to prepare their infant for reading, giving violin lessons to toddlers, and enrolling kindergartners in chess classes. Forget what developmental guidelines, based on years of scientific observation, recommend as suitable to your child's age and stage. Time is of the essence, so these parents push, push, push, all so their kids will (they hope) achieve, achieve, achieve.

A part of this push is the current standard of "success" determined by a portfolio of numbers, and these days there is no child left untested. From preschool admission tests to LSATs—it's making us crazy worrying that our kids aren't going to be good enough. So there's no time for play. It's all about tutoring (which is now a billion-dollar industry), using educational toys (another billion-dollar industry), doing extra "mind-building" activities, and studying. But we're seeing an impact from this parenting style that isn't pretty.

Kid stress, anxiety, and perfectionism have never been higher; their honesty quotients, never lower. Kid cheating is now of epidemic proportions, all because we've pushed character and developmental appropriateness out of our child-rearing formula.

The Change to Parent For Learn to appreciate your child's natural talents and abilities, and fit your parenting to your child's developmental stage.

Deadly Style 3: (Quick-Fix) Band-Aid Parenting

Relying on fast solutions to temporarily fix a problem instead aiming for real, lasting change

We're tired. We're harried. We're short on time, and we're trying to make ends meet. We need everything to be easy and quick, including our approach to discipline. We'll do anything to get our kids to act right—as long as it'll work *right now*. So we use that "1-2-3 Method" ("That's warning one . . . warning two . . . warning three") to head off a tantrum, buy those fancy behavior charts, promise our kid a new Lexus if he's good, and even give out pills. Seriously.

Experts warn that this pill-popping craze is a big reason that the use of drugs designed to curb hyperactivity have tripled since 1993.¹⁹ It's just easier to give the pill than to teach kids a new way to behave, eh? Now don't get me wrong. I'm a former special education teacher, and I bless the pharmaceutical industry. There are some kids who do need prescribed medication to help them control their impulses. My concern is about those times when we rely on this Band-Aid approach really just to make life easier for ourselves. Let's just admit it.

Besides, these quick-fix strategies only teach kids to act right based on warnings, rewards, or pills. Effective discipline *always* is instructive and helps the child learn how

to right his wrong. A quick-fix style may bring temporary relief, but almost never creates real, lasting change, which is why many of our kids keep relapsing back to those same bad behaviors and we end up more exhausted and discouraged.

The Change to Parent For Learn that the most effective way to discipline is always to take a few minutes to help your child understand what was wrong and how to make things right.

Deadly Style 4: Buddy Parenting

Placing popularity with your child above establishing limits and boundaries or saying no

Nearly half of parents today admit that deep down they want to be their “child’s best friend,”²⁰ and there sure is no bigger friendship ender than saying no. We can’t stand the idea of making an unpopular decision, turning our kids down, or (heaven forbid) disciplining our kids if doing so might cause them to resent us in any way.

And it appears that our kids have our number. One survey of grade school kids found that when they crave something new, most expect to ask nine times before their parents give in.²¹ Of course we want our kids to like us—and someday they will become our friends. Right now they need a parent who sets rules and boundaries and doesn’t blur the line between buddy and adult. Besides, the truth is that our inability to turn our kids down isn’t helping them grow to be secure, responsible, resilient, and compassionate. Instead, it is creating what most adults believe is the most spoiled and ill-behaved generation ever. Over 80 percent of adults think kids today are more spoiled than kids were just ten or fifteen years ago.²²

The Change to Parent For Learn to set clear boundaries and firm limits, take back your control, and realize that what your child needs most is a parent and not a friend.

Deadly Style 5: Accessory Parenting

Measuring your worth and success as a parent on the basis of your child’s accolades

Forget healthy and well adjusted—over the past two decades, what has taken precedence is spawning the “perfect” child whom we can proudly show off. And thus dawned the era of the Trophy Kid Syndrome. Every little accomplishment, test score, or hockey goal suddenly became bragging rights, and oh, how parents using this style love sharing those accolades. Just in case anyone missed hearing about little Buford’s latest achievement, refrigerators are always plastered with all his achievements, certificates, and gold star papers. The newest trophy—among thousands—is sure to be displayed proudly on the mantel.

Showing them off is all part of the style, as every new trophy and recently earned award is a direct reflection of how well the child has been parented. And a child's success is a living representation of a parent's own worth.

Gay Norton Edelman, senior editor of *Family Circle*, aptly termed this style “accessory parenting.” All is fine and dandy if a parent can share something meritorious to the rest of the world or at least with the neighbor next door. (“Susie is in the gifted program, you know.” “Can you believe it? Keithy made captain *again*.”) But if the child fails or receives a less than perfect score, it can only mean that the parent somehow flunked. This style of parenting is really about making our children an extension of our own wants, needs, and dreams. It fuels excessive competitiveness among parents and creates enormous guilt and stress if we feel that our kids aren't measuring up, leaving our kids feeling as though they've let us down. If the accessory parenting style continues, the child's identity is threatened, and an unhealthy codependency emerges, with both parent and kid depending on each other for their sense of self-worth.

The Change to Parent For Learn to see your child as a unique individual separate from yourself, and tailor your parenting to her own special traits, talents, and needs.

Deadly Style 6: Paranoid Parenting

Obsessively keeping your child safe from any physical or psychological harm

Keeping kids safe is always a top parent priority, but these days there is a heightened fear of letting our kids out of our sight for even a nanosecond. The best name for this over-the-top always worried style is *paranoid parenting*.²³ Of course, turning into a nervous wreck isn't hard when we're constantly reminded of dangers looming everywhere and threatening our children's safety and well-being. Kidnappers. Terrorism. School shootings. Sex predators. Cyberbullying. Online pedophiles. Tainted food. Lead-painted toys.

It's scary out there, so we rein our kids in a little tighter. We watch them closer and we protect far more—and sometimes to the extreme.

“Don't do that! You could get hurt!” “Don't talk to strangers!” “Don't go too far!”

We provide our kindergartners with those new cell phones lined with sweet Disney characters “just in case they're snatched by a child molester.” We install webcams in our homes so we can peek in to ensure that our children aren't being abused by the nanny. We purchase kid jackets embedded with GPS trackers and hand sanitizers to keep them germ free. We even think about buying those backpacks lined with a bulletproof plate that protects against gunfire (designed by a couple of very concerned dads).²⁴

But constantly fretting about dangers that “might” happen only breeds fear into kids. In fact, the more we tighten our safety net, the more obsessed we become and the more anxious and less confident our kids turn out. Is it any wonder that today's kids are more anxious than any other generation?²⁵

The Change to Parent For Learn to relax a bit more, realize when you're being too protective so that your child learns to face life, and handle your own worries so that you don't pass your fears to your child.

Deadly Style 7: Secondary Parenting

*Relinquishing your influence such that your children's world is controlled more by outsiders, including corporations, marketers, and the media*²⁶

In case you haven't noticed, today's kids are media driven. Computers. Wii. YouTube. Video games. TV. Facebook. iPods. DVDs. Cell phones. It's no wonder they're called the plugged-in generation. Many kids spend more time involved with media than with anything else but sleeping.²⁷ Research shows that 99 percent of boys and 94 percent of girls ages twelve to seventeen play computer, Web, portable, or console games.²⁸

Television viewing has increased by more than an hour a day from just five years ago. Considering that almost two-thirds of all eight- to eighteen-year-olds have a TV in their bedroom, that's an easy accomplishment.²⁹ Even two- to seven-year-olds are putting in an average of about three hours per day of "screen time."³⁰ Children are especially vulnerable because they believe what they see. And make no mistake: they are bombarded with an incessant parade of images—of sex, alcohol use, violence, vulgarity, and commercialism—that are pushing them to grow up too fast too soon.

But there's another danger: all that "plugged-in" time means less face-to-face time with us. Once we take a "secondary" role in our child's eyes, we begin to lose our power, and the prevailing culture becomes our substitute. Your child becomes more vulnerable to outside pressures; he is more likely to rely on someone other than you to guide him, and more likely to adopt others' values.

The Change to Parent For Realize that you are the most powerful influence in guiding your child's values, attitudes, and behavior as well as in protecting him against risky behaviors; intentionally find ways to stay more involved in your child's life.

SO HOW DO WE CHANGE?

We've made parenting much too hard. We've gotten ourselves further away from solid, basic parenting, throwing out the core principles of effective parenting established by more than fifty years of research in the child development field. We began relying on what everyone else thought and less and less on our own instincts. Our quick-fix endeavors only fueled those annoying behaviors. One thing is clear: staying stuck in our present "autoparent" mode won't do our kids or ourselves any favors.

It's time that we change. Take back parenting. Use our instincts. Roll up our sleeves and dig in. No more quick fixes: let's take on one issue at a time and turn things around until we get the change we want in our kids. For the sake of ourselves and our families . . . it's time.

GEARING UP FOR REAL AND LASTING CHANGE

“My four-year-old’s tantrums are nuclear. Time-outs work at the moment, but a few hours later he has another meltdown. How do I stop these exorcisms once and for all?”

“My daughter is such a pessimist. Is there a way to change her attitude so she has a more positive view about life instead of such a doom-and-gloom mentality?”

“My son’s teacher says he has ADHD and should be on Ritalin. Is there anything we can do to help him without pills?”

“Mealtime is a nightmare because my daughter is such a picky eater that I’m worried she’ll develop an eating disorder. How do I help her develop healthier eating habits?”

Did you ever think child rearing could be so darn difficult? If you’re feeling a tad bit confused or even at your wit’s end about your kid’s behavior, believe me: you’re not alone. I receive dozens of e-mails every week from parents asking for help.

“When should I worry?” “Is my child’s behavior normal?” “Nothing works!” “He just keeps doing the same thing!” “What am I doing wrong?”

It isn’t as if you haven’t tried finding ways to stop those annoying behaviors, implement strong values, and teach your kids to “Just say no!” You’ve bought every parent book off the shelf and checked countless others from the library. You’ve read dozens of online articles (which are certainly ample these days; I just Googled the word *parenting* and got 84,300,000 hits in 0.16 seconds). You’ve talked to your pediatrician and almost (well next to almost) had the courage to ask your mother-in-law. You’ve sought out those experts but are even more confused—each one gives you a different approach. You’ve tried all those cute solutions that your girlfriends swear work for her kid, but they don’t work for yours.

Despite your efforts, there is no change. Oh sure, the time-out or that newest discipline fad may have curbed your kid’s annoying behavior at the moment, but the following day, that same old bad behavior returns.

Why? Well, the reason is that you really didn’t parent for *change*—real, lasting, permanent change. After all, your parenting goal is to help your children learn to act right, behave, develop healthy lifestyle choices, and make wise decisions on their own someday. The problem is that most parenting manuals these days aim for the quick fix. All those books and articles give lots of tips and advice, but they fall short in that their approach doesn’t show you how to parent so that the problem is replaced with a new and improved behavior or attitude *and doesn’t return*. Now that’s a different approach to parenting. And that’s really what we want for our kids. Right?

My goal is to help you parent for that lasting change you want in your child. That’s a big part of how this book is different from any other parenting manual. This book provides

step-by-step strategies based on proven scientific findings as to how to make that desired change a reality. No more hiring an outside therapist or parent coach to do so. I'll guide you through the steps. I'll ask you questions to help you figure out what's really going on with your child. I'll give you emergency intervention strategies as well as more effective responses for you to try. I'll warn you when you should worry and tell you when it is time to get outside help. I'll also provide new habits to teach your child that will replace her current inappropriate behavior or attitude.

I'll be your personal coach in helping you take on that parenting challenge that concerns you right now. Your job is to commit to making that change, be willing to alter your current response and adopt a more effective one, and hang in there with me. But above all, what I want you to do is use your instinct and common sense about what really will work best for your child. And if you do, here's what I guarantee: a changed child and a more confident and satisfied parent—you! So let's get started.

ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT PARENTING FOR CHANGE

I've provided all the tools you need to help you deal with the top 101 contemporary child-rearing challenges. All these strategies are based on sound psychological principles and proven scientific research. I'll show you step-by-step how to achieve the change you want.

Before we begin, however, here are answers to a few of the most common questions you may have as you parent for the change you desire for your child:

When can I begin using the strategies for change in this book?

This book is designed to be used immediately. In fact, as soon as you finish reading this Introduction, you'll have everything you need to start parenting for change.

I know you don't have time to wade through pages of child development theory about problems that don't concern your child at this moment. So don't read about issues that don't apply to your situation or child. Instead, refer to the table of contents and identify the challenge that concerns you now. Then flip to those pages, where you will find step-by-step strategies and solutions that tell you what to do and how to make that change happen. Not only will this approach save you time by focusing on only one issue at a time, but you'll be more likely to succeed with the goal you set for yourself.

How were the 101 parenting challenges in the book selected?

I wanted to ensure that the topics addressed parents' most pressing concerns, so I used a variety of sources. I combed the contents of leading parenting magazines, especially *Parents*, as I'm on their advisory board, which helps me stay current with upcoming fea-