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**Scott Lancaster**  
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*Directors, DIYFather*

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***Australian &  
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# ***Being a Great Dad***

FOR

**DUMMIES®**

**by Stefan Korn, Scott Lancaster and Eric Mooij**



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Wiley Publishing Australia Pty Ltd

## Being a Great Dad For Dummies®

Australian & New Zealand Edition published by

**Wiley Publishing Australia Pty Ltd**

42 McDougall Street

Milton Qld 4064

www.dummies.com

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National Library of Australia

Cataloguing-in-Publication data

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Author:	Korn, Stefan.
Title:	Being a Great Dad For Dummies/Stefan Korn.
ISBN:	978 1 74216 972 9 (pbk.)
Notes:	Includes index.
Subjects:	Fatherhood Father and child. Parenting.

Dewey Number: 306.8742

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Cover image: © iStockphoto.com/Bondarenko Liliya

Typeset by diacriTech, Chennai, India

Printed in China by

Printplus Limited

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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# *About the Authors*

**DIYFather.com** has become one of the most recognised organisations promoting active fatherhood in Australia and New Zealand. DIYFather.com was brought into this world by Wellington-based dads Stefan Korn, Scott Lancaster and Eric Mooij, who recognised the need for social innovation in the fathering space. DIYFather is a social enterprise that aims to help men become the best fathers they can be. The directors of DIYFather have been recognised for their work by winning the 2009 New Zealander of the Year award in the education category.

**Stefan Korn** is a New Zealand-based internet entrepreneur. He is passionate about e-commerce and the web, and in general loves getting involved in new businesses. His wife Raquel gave birth to their son Noah in May 2007 and the experience of becoming a father, as well as the challenges of looking after Noah, prompted him to join DIYFather. Stefan has a PhD in Artificial Intelligence and an MBA in international business. Before becoming an entrepreneur Stefan held senior management roles for large international corporations in the IT, Telecommunication and Hospitality sector. In addition to DIYFather, Stefan runs an investment company for online startups, WebFund. Stefan is also actively engaged in community projects and enjoys tutoring for Wellington Community Education.

**Scott Lancaster** is the founder of DIYFather.com. He is married to Renee, who gave birth to their daughter Pyper in July 2007. After discovering what little parenting information was available for fathers, Scott approached the other two directors, who helped him build DIYFather. Scott looked after Pyper full-time for the first two years of her life and experienced being a stay-at-home dad (SAHD). Scott has an Applied Science degree majoring in Agriculture and comes from a farming background.

**Eric Mooij** is married to Andrea, who welcomed baby Ava into the world in April 2008. Eric is also father to Nastassja (16), Christian (15) and Amber (14). Although he is not living with his three older children, Eric has regular contact with them and supports them in every way possible. Eric is keen to make a stand for separated families. Coming from a broken family himself and having relived this experience with his first three children, he works hard to be a positive role model. Outside of DIYFather, Eric works in IT and project management.

# ***Dedication***

We'd like to dedicate this book to all dads.

# *Authors' Acknowledgements*

First and foremost we would like to thank our children Pyper, Nastassja, Christian, Amber, Ava and Noah for giving us the opportunity to be fathers in the first place, and for putting up with us writing a book when we could have played with them! Special thanks of course to our partners Renee, Andrea and Raquel for their continuing support and encouragement, and special thanks to Raquel for proofreading the manuscript. Thanks also to our families and friends who helped out with baby-sitting duties at crucial times.

Huge thanks to the team at Plunket who provided a lot of the research material this book is based on and helped us ensure the content of the book is safe and sound. Special thanks to Erin Beatson and Claire Rumble who have been a fantastic source of wisdom and inspiration.

A very special thank you also to Kimberley Rothwell who has been the most wonderful support we could have wished for in getting this book together.

We'd like to thank our publisher Wiley and especially Bronwyn Duhigg for taking on this project, and Catherine Spedding for doing such a great job at editing our manuscript!

And last but not least we would like to give thanks to the worldwide community of dads who have contributed content and encouragement over the years. There are too many of you to list everyone individually, but if you've checked out our site, have participated in our classes or have been in touch with us — thanks heaps from Stefan, Scott and Eric!

## **Publisher's Acknowledgements**

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our online registration form located at <http://dummies.custhelp.com>.

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

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**Editorial Manager:** Gabrielle Packman

### ***Production***

**Graphics:** Glenn Lumsden (pages 101, 106 and 109), various artists and the Wiley Art Studio

**Cartoons:** Glenn Lumsden

**Proofreader:** Miriana Dasovic

**Indexer:** Karen Gillen



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# Foreword

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**I**n recent years an increasing number of fathers have been looking to take more time with their children, and searching for the resources and tools to help them do so. And who better to write a new book for fathers than dads themselves?

Attitudes have relaxed around previously strictly defined parenting roles and now there is more flexibility about how different family members — including dads — can care for their children.

Plunket has long recognised and encouraged the importance of a father in a child's life. Evidence shows that children's development benefits in many ways when fathers are involved in their lives. It benefits them emotionally, physically and intellectually. Research also shows that fathers and mothers play and interact differently with their children.

As the face of modern fathering is constantly changing, Plunket strives to look for new opportunities to support fathers to take part in their children's lives. In underlining the importance of the fathering role, we are committed to helping dads. Plunket will always support making a variety of resources available to suit a multitude of parents and families.

No parent has a manual to help with the most challenging and rewarding job in the world — but having the right tools is a great start and Plunket is happy to welcome *Being a Great Dad For Dummies*, Australian & New Zealand Edition, as a new tool in the parenting toolkit.

Jenny Prince, CEO, Plunket



**Being a Great Dad For Dummies, Australian & New Zealand Edition** \_\_\_\_\_

# Introduction

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**T**his book is the first *For Dummies* book on parenting specifically written for dads in Australia and New Zealand. We believe a quiet revolution is happening among men who want to become more involved in the upbringing of their children. Historically fathers have taken a bit of a passive role in looking after babies and young children, and many a father would have felt out of place, not knowing what to do or what he was there for. Fortunately, things are changing. Lots of guys now want a piece of the baby action and are rolling up their sleeves to muck in with everything that needs doing — from nappy changes to baby baths, and tummy time to toilet training.

The number of stay-at-home dads (SAHDs) is constantly rising in almost all developed countries, a sure sign that the parenting world is changing and that staying home looking after the kids is no longer a reason to hand in your man card. In fact SAHDs are leading the way for all other dads to show the world how brilliant dads can be at looking after babies and children. Countless studies have been done by fatherhood institutes around the world to provide scientific evidence about the difference a dad makes in the lives of his children. Unfortunately many problems our children experience these days are linked to absent or uninvolved fathers. So, to experience the ‘coming out’ of active dads and the rise of a new generation of fully involved dads is truly inspiring.

With *Being a Great Dad For Dummies*, Australian & New Zealand Edition, we would like to do our bit in helping along this peaceful revolution and to help every new dad or dad-to-be walk his journey to active fatherhood. The great news is, being an active dad is not difficult. Dads can do everything mums do except give birth and breastfeed. So if you’re worried about becoming a dad, relax, read on and know that everyday blokes make fantastic dads. Above all, enjoy the wild ride to fatherhood — being a dad is the best time of your life!

## About This Book

This book is your guide to dadhood. In *Being a Great Dad For Dummies*, Australian & New Zealand Edition, we share the collective wisdom from dads and parenting organisations gathered through DIYFather.com over the years. We wrote it all down in this book, so that you can become the best father you can be. Here are some of the important pieces we pull together for you.

- ✓ Much has changed over the last three decades and the previous generation's approach to having children. Modern dads want to be involved and they want to find out for themselves what it means to be a dad.
- ✓ Your kids, your family and the world at large need strong dads. Fathers have been somewhat absent from childcare and upbringing because of work, family situation or a limited understanding of the role of a father. It's about time that changed.
- ✓ You may find it hard to even approach the topic of babies and children. Worry no more.
- ✓ You may be missing out on the best moments of your life if you feel you don't know what to do with babies or children — so we tell you.
- ✓ You have everything you need to be a fantastic dad, you just don't know it yet, or perhaps lack a bit of confidence to demonstrate your dad skills.
- ✓ After flipping through the pages of this book, you'll impress your baby and your partner with all the cool things you know and are able to do with and for them.

## *Conventions Used in This Book*

All web addresses appear in monofont, which looks like `this`. When this book was printed, some web addresses may have needed to break across two lines of text. If that happened, rest assured that we haven't put in any extra characters (such as hyphens) to indicate the break. So, when using one of these web addresses, just type in exactly what you see in this book, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist.

## *What You're Not to Read*

Although we hope you read every word we've written, we understand your life is busy and you want to read only the need-to-know info. You can safely skip the sidebars, which are shaded grey boxes containing text. These provide supporting or entertaining information that isn't critical to your understanding of the topic.



Throughout this book, we give you the website addresses of a number of dedicated parenting or fatherhood sites where you can find more information on some of the topics we've discussed, such as buying sensible baby gear and toys, parenting styles, effective behaviour management, illnesses and special conditions, childcare and child education. Although you don't have to go to these websites, having a browse through them is well worth your while.

## *Foolish Assumptions*

We assume that you're reading this book because you've just been told that you'll be a dad soon or you've decided it's about time you became one. You may also have been told by your partner to 'skill up' and read about parenting so she doesn't have to do all the work around the baby. Good — because you don't want your partner to do all the work around bub anyway.

We assume you're somewhat puzzled by the prospects of becoming a dad and would like an easy and comprehensive guide. So, to make sure we're all on the same page, this book is for you if you're

- ✓ Freaked out about becoming a dad
- ✓ Concerned about your lack of knowledge and experience around all things babies
- ✓ Three months into your partner's pregnancy and feel like it's all getting a bit too complicated
- ✓ Looking for an alternative to being told everything you need to know about babies by your partner
- ✓ On your way to the delivery suite and have missed all the antenatal classes
- ✓ Already a dad and want to skill up and find out what you can do to help your baby develop his full potential
- ✓ A dad to one or more children but feel like you could be doing more with your kids
- ✓ Going through a difficult time in your fatherhood journey and would like to read up on stuff

Lastly, we assume you haven't had much exposure to or experience with babies and children up to now.

## *How This Book Is Organised*

This book is divided into six major parts. At your fingertips is everything you need to guide you through the first five years of your fatherhood journey.

### *Part I: From Here to Paternity: Conception to Birth*

Part I covers all aspects of your fatherhood journey before your baby is born. Naturally it all begins with conception, so Chapter 1 contains tips on how to improve your chances of conceiving and what to do if conception doesn't happen. After that we give you a man's guide to pregnancy and share some secrets on keeping your pregnant partner happy and healthy. We also give you the no-bull guide to getting the house, nursery and your life ready for the imminent arrival of your little addition to the family. Finally we help you get ready for the big moment when your baby arrives in this world.

### *Part II: The First Year*

This part is really where 'the rubber hits the road' in terms of your fatherhood experience. Your child's been born and plenty of upskilling is required on your part. So we break down all the baby care skills for you in a dad-friendly way. As your baby grows and develops, amazing experiences are to be had for every dad. We provide practical tips, activities and inspirations so you can help your little champ develop her full potential and have lots of fun with her along the way.

### *Part III: The Toddler Years*

This part covers years two and three when the little person in your house is referred to as a 'toddler'. Lots of fun is to be had with children this age. You may have heard of the 'terrible twos'. While a few challenges need to be mastered during this period, we believe that keeping your family happy and healthy isn't rocket science. In this part we describe some useful principles you can use to help with behaviour management, to master the development of skills and to get organised if you want to return to work or have another child.

## ***Part IV: The Preschool Years***

In this part we give you a helping hand to get through a particularly active period of your little champ's development. The first chapter in this part is packed with ideas, activities and games to avoid the one sentence every father dreads, 'Dad, I'm bored!' We also give you a full update on all health- and nutrition-related information you need now that your child is testing his physical and mental capabilities (and your nerves). We round off this part by demystifying the various choices you've got for your child's education.

## ***Part V: What Happens When***

This part is for all dads who have chosen the road less travelled and have become a stay-at-home dad (SAHD). In Part V we also tackle some of the more difficult journeys of fatherhood, including helping your child through a serious illness or losing a child, parenting a child with a disability or special condition, and sharing care of your child following separation and divorce.

## ***Part VI: The Part of Tens***

This part is perfect for all super busy dads. In these chapters we give you ten tips on making pregnancy a nicer experience for your partner, on really connecting with your newborn baby, and on how to engage with your toddler. If during your fatherhood journey you find yourself stuck for tips and need some inspiration, Part VI is your friend when in need.

## ***Appendix***

The Appendix is a list of support organisations on all topics covered in the book, including general childbirth education and parenting, pregnancy and birth, multiple births, childcare and education, child development, child safety, postnatal depression, sudden unexpected death in infants (SUDI), disability, divorce and separation, playtime, health, grief and loss of a child, illness and special conditions, palliative care, and general fatherhood.

## ***Glossary***

The glossary defines the most commonly used terms you'll hear during pregnancy or when visiting a paediatrician.

## Icons Used in This Book

Icons are those little pictures you see sprinkled in the margins throughout this book. Here's what they mean:



This icon denotes critical information that you really need to take away with you. Considering the state of our own overcrowded memories, we wouldn't ask you to remember anything unless it was really important.



This bull's-eye alerts you to on-target advice, insights or recommendations that we've picked up over the years.



This icon serves as a warning, telling you to avoid something that's potentially harmful. Take heed!



The internet is a wonderful place to access information on being a great dad. This icon highlights some helpful sites for you to check out.

## Where to Go from Here

You choose what happens next. This book is packed with information to help you at whatever state you are on your fatherhood journey. You can go directly to the topics of most interest to you, or you can start at the beginning and take it from there. With the information in *Being a Great Dad For Dummies*, Australian and New Zealand Edition, we're confident that you can handle any challenges fatherhood (or your little champ) throws at you. Most importantly, this book will help you become a confident dad and have fun along the way.

# Part I

## From Here to Paternity: Conception to Birth

*Glenn Lumsden*



*'She's cute now, but I can't wait to  
see her once her cells have divided  
a few more times.'*

## *In this part . . .*

**T**he way each man reacts to the news he's going to become a father is as individual and unique as his fingerprints, but all men share one thing — your lives will never be the same. Being a dad doesn't start the day you meet your newborn child, it begins much sooner than that, in some cases even from before your child is conceived. In this part, we look at what it means to be a dad and prepare you for the hurdles you may face on the way to meeting your baby: From your partner getting pregnant to understanding pregnancy and dealing with the biggest event of all — the birth of your child.