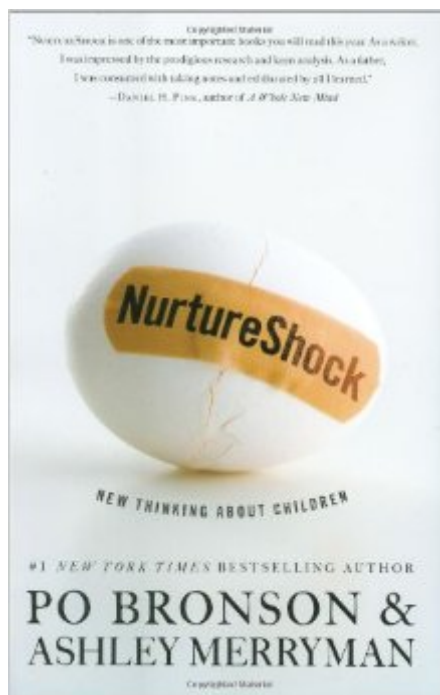


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# NurtureShock: New Thinking About Children



## Synopsis

In a world of modern, involved, caring parents, why are so many kids aggressive and cruel? Where is intelligence hidden in the brain, and why does that matter? Why do cross-racial friendships decrease in schools that are more integrated? If 98% of kids think lying is morally wrong, then why do 98% of kids lie? What's the single most important thing that helps infants learn language? NurtureShock is a groundbreaking collaboration between award-winning science journalists Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman. They argue that when it comes to children, we've mistaken good intentions for good ideas. With impeccable storytelling and razor-sharp analysis, they demonstrate that many of modern society's strategies for nurturing children are in fact backfiring--because key twists in the science have been overlooked. Nothing like a parenting manual, the authors' work is an insightful exploration of themes and issues that transcend children's (and adults') lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Parenting books are ubiquitous. How to sift through and determine which are worthy? I have a teenage daughter and have read quite a few. Even when I thought I was impressed, there was always something nagging at me about them. I determined that many of the books had an outside or hidden agenda, which was to socialize parents according to a specific sheep-herding mentality. Often, a social consciousness or a reaction to a negative social consciousness about raising children informed these "manuals." In other words, the science behind the thinking was weak--they were often politically charged or reactionary. The blurbs about this book intrigued me, but I was also

skeptical--until I read the first chapter on the inverse power of praise. Parents and guardians--just get ye to a bookstore and read the first chapter. I think you will be galvanized by its immediacy and logic (as well as back-up data) and it will inspire you to continue. It all clicked when I read about our praise-junkie tendencies, and how it has a paradoxical effect. The authors never condescend to us; they maintain that all of us want to make the best and most informed decisions. For instance, most of us start telling our babies, from the cradle "You are so smart" as almost a mantra of parenting. The authors do not criticize positive praise--they are revealing the data for specific types of praise. Telling a kid he or she is smart rather than specifically praising them for their efforts will eventually backfire. The child will have a tendency to not put out a lot of effort when they are challenged because they are stymied by the feeling that they have to stay smart, or that they must be NOT smart if they can't solve a problem or puzzle.

NurtureShock, Bronson and Merryman's book about misplaced assumptions in the rearing of children is a worthwhile read for any parent. More a guide for critical thinking about our somewhat whacked out approach to child raising in America (reserving spots in elite preschools before a child is even born) than a guide to raising children, the book presents fresh data, surprising conclusions, and frequent cautions about old assumptions. NurtureShock joins a new mini-genre of literature that sells by turning old assumptions on their heads, and making us question what we once thought was surely true. Also in this category is Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything (P.S.) and Outliers: The Story of Success. The book is highly entertaining, and impossible to read without a number of "Ah Hah!" moments, but does have limitations. While presenting powerful evidence that it is best not to dole out generic praise by the boxcar load to children (it actually impairs their performance) the book is at its best. Teachers, by the way, have known this for decades, and good teachers transformed long ago from non-specific cheerleaders (You're doing great!!) to more specific statements ("I like the way you stuck with that math problem until you figured it out").

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