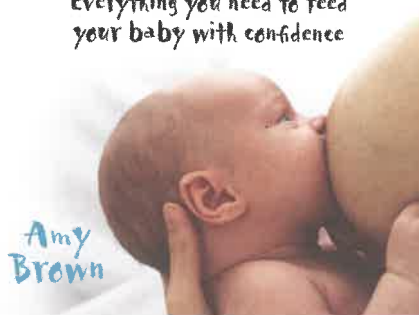


# the Positive Breastfeeding Book

Everything you need to feed your baby with confidence



**The Positive Breastfeeding Book: Everything You Need to Feed Your Baby with Confidence** by Amy Brown, Pinter & Martin

What I like most about this fantastic book is that it puts breastfeeding into context. It's a shameful realisation that when most women have a baby, they have not seen anyone breastfeed, or do not understand that it's the normal biological way to feed a baby or that the science of milk production means that a lot of feeding is required to get supply going. This is what has been lost by our living in isolation from extended family, and through the promotion of formula feeding over the generations. So what this book sets out to do is inform, and it's done in the nicest possible way. Amy Brown is a scientist, so you know what she is writing is well researched, but the book is not bogged down in scientific detail. It's written in a chatty, friendly, relaxed way, as if an experienced woman were casually sharing all she knows with others – which is what we need to make breastfeeding "just what we do" again.

Brown looks at how breastfeeding fits into having a baby, so there are chapters on sleep, skin-to-skin and carrying, and how what you do with your baby can support breastfeeding. She explains why breastmilk is the most amazing food for a baby, and details all the great benefits for mother and child. But the realities of breastfeeding are not glossed over,

and Brown discusses various problems and how to overcome them, including feeding in difficult circumstances, and there are plenty of anecdotes from mothers. Brown emphasises how important help and support are, and she suggests how to talk with your partner about your needs, and what to do if you feel isolated. She gives excellent information about the different professionals, volunteers and organisations that are there to help, and what they offer.

I saw this book as a manual for new motherhood rather than a book "just" on breastfeeding. I think any new mother would feel informed and reassured by all the knowledge imparted, and I hope the wealth of information can help us all understand the wider benefits of breastfeeding and why it's so important to all in society that breastfeeding should become "normal" again.



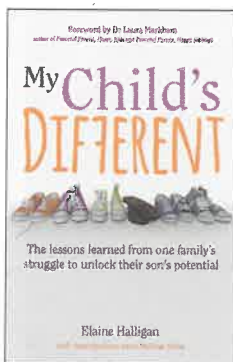
**Movement: Your Child's First Language - How Movement and Music Assists Brain Development in Children Aged 3-7 Years** by Sally Goddard Blythe, Hawthorn Press

In this detailed book, Sally Goddard Blythe explains how movement, music and communication are all connected. She writes about how, despite the modernisation of our world, babies' needs remain relatively primeval: to experience a range of movements and sounds in order to develop in a holistic way. She warns of "splinter skills" if children

are forced into formal (sedentary) education too soon. There is a lengthy chapter on reflexes children are born with and how opportunities to move and explore their bodies in a certain way are precursors to other areas of development, such as speech.

In the chapter on nursery rhymes, Blythe relates how she discovered that her work interlinked with that of Russian physician and musician Michael Lazarev. Together they have written a CD (included with the book) of modern nursery rhymes with accompanying actions, to help children experience a range of sounds and movements.

Blythe writes that some parents, "through lack of childhood experience or awareness", do not understand the importance of free movement or talking to, reading to or singing with a young child. She worries how a lack of free play, our noisy environments and a lot of time spent in forward-facing buggies impact on speech and movement development. What is reassuring in this book is how easy it is to remedy this. The message is that all we need to do is enable our babies and children to move and explore freely, and use the musical cadence of our voices to facilitate development. Through use of this book by parents and practitioners, the hope is that this message can be widely spread and we can get "back to basics" of using the "simple virtues" of music and movement in our parenting.



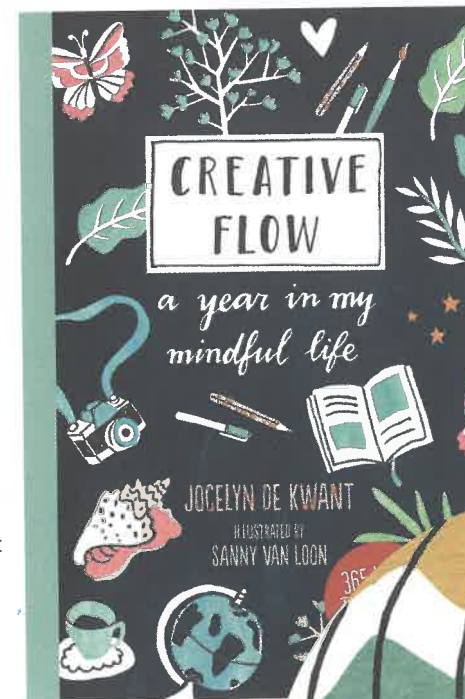
**My Child's Different: The Lessons Learned from One Family's Struggle to Unlock Their Son's Potential** by Elaine Halligan and Melissa Hood, Crown House Publishing

This is the story of Elaine Halligan's son Sam, how she and her husband discovered he was "different", and what they did to support him. By the time he was aged 7, Sam had been excluded from three schools and was labelled with numerous conditions such as pathological demand avoidance. His parents struggled to know what to do for the best. Through one of the institutions Sam attended they met Melissa

Hood and started to learn new parenting skills and how these related to Sam's needs. These had a transformational effect on him – he was able to gain self-esteem, learn to regulate his behaviour and be accepted in a school that knew how best to support his dyslexia and where he was able to thrive.

Halligan's aim in this book is to provide hope. She writes: "I've gone from feeling an overriding sense of failure in my abilities as a mother to believing that, as parents, the biggest impact we have on our children's lives is through the power of our words." What stands out for me in this book is how the "simple" changes of using descriptive praise and emotion coaching had such a huge impact on Sam. Being able to attend a school that suited him enabled him to find and develop his passions. He has now attended university and travelled independently – things his parents never thought would happen.

Each chapter about an area of Sam's life includes reflection points, and a section from Hood where she explains in detail the parenting strategies Sam's parents were using and how these helped him. This is a great book – a combination of a family story and parenting advice to inspire those struggling with a child who seems "different".



**Creative Flow: A Year in my Mindful Life** by Jocelyn de Kwant, illustrated by Sanny van Loon, Leaping Hare Press

Jocelyn de Kwant introduces this book by explaining how she reached burnout in her twenties. Part of making herself well again was to spend time in nature and take up crafting. She also discovered mindfulness and realised it was easier for her to stay in the moment if she was drawing, writing or crafting. This book is a record of all the things that helped her – "365 Ways to Embrace the Now". It's designed to be used as a beautiful creative journal, with space for drawings, doodles, writing and sticking. There are 12 chapters, including 'Play', 'Body' and 'Explore', each with a short inspirational introduction. I love the reminder that even focusing on a tiny moment in nature, such as watching clouds drift by or taking the time to listen to birdsong, can help ground us. And the importance of appreciating the everyday, "the magic of little things: clean sheets on the bed, the way the sunrays enter the living room, a bath". We are reminded of the importance of play – doing something just because we like doing it, without having a goal in mind – and of how paying attention to our senses can help

us reconnect. Even cooking can be mindful: when chopping onions, just chop onions. Sanny van Loon's illustrations are fun and stylish and I think this book can help bring joy and calm whenever it is picked up; a wonderful way to take a few moments out of a busy day to reconnect and create.

