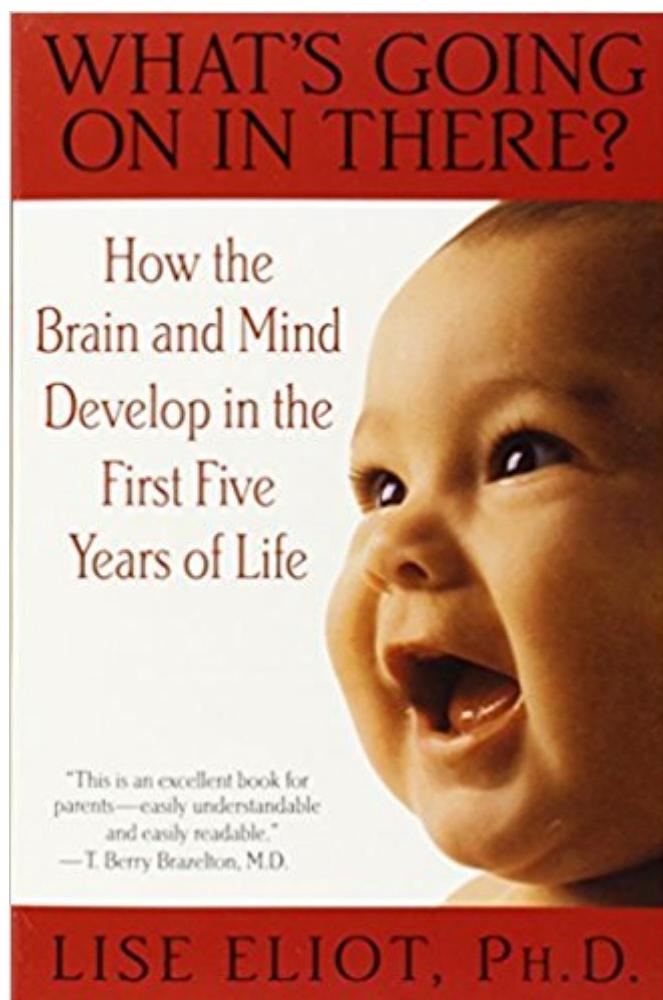


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What's Going On In There? : How The Brain And Mind Develop In The First Five Years Of Life



Synopsis

As a research neuroscientist, Lise Eliot has made the study of the human brain her life's work. But it wasn't until she was pregnant with her first child that she became intrigued with the study of brain development. She wanted to know precisely how the baby's brain is formed, and when and how each sense, skill, and cognitive ability is developed. And just as important, she was interested in finding out how her role as a nurturer can affect this complex process. How much of her baby's development is genetically ordained--and how much is determined by environment? Is there anything parents can do to make their babies' brains work better--to help them become smarter, happier people? Drawing upon the exploding research in this field as well as the stories of real children, *What's Going On in There?* is a lively and thought-provoking book that charts the brain's development from conception through the critical first five years. In examining the many factors that play crucial roles in that process, *What's Going On in There?* explores the evolution of the senses, motor skills, social and emotional behaviors, and mental functions such as attention, language, memory, reasoning, and intelligence. This remarkable book also discusses: how a baby's brain is "assembled" from scratch the critical prenatal factors that shape brain development how the birthing process itself affects the brain which forms of stimulation are most effective at promoting cognitive development how boys' and girls' brains develop differently how nutrition, stress, and other physical and social factors can permanently affect a child's brain Brilliantly blending cutting-edge science with a mother's wisdom and insight, *What's Going On in There?* is an invaluable contribution to the nature versus nurture debate. Children's development is determined both by the genes they are born with and the richness of their early environment. This timely and important book shows parents the innumerable ways in which they can actually help their children grow better brains.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Subtitled 'How the Brain and Mind Develop in the First Five Years of Life' and written by a neuroscientist mother of three, this book benefits as much from its organization as the material it presents. Research, supplemented with anecdotes, is divided into chapters based on sense or function and then detailed chronologically within each section. Chapters include: The Basic Biology of Brain Development; How Birth Affects the Brain; The Importance of Touch; The Early World of Smell; Taste, Milk, and the Origins of Food Preference; Wiring Up the Visual Brain; How Hearing Evolves; Motor Milestones; Social-Emotional Growth; The Experience of Memory; Language and the Developing Brain; How Intelligence Grows in the Brain; Nature, Nurture, and Sex Differences in Intellectual Development; How to Raise a Smarter Child. This is one of those books you should write in -- underline, highlight, take notes -- because if you are indeed interested in using this information to understand your child's progressive developmental changes, you will be referring to it often. The author presents a lot of research material in accessible language and style, but the book is dense and is not a day-to-day how-to guide. You will not read about colic or how to tell a cold from the flu, but you will learn why your four-month old prefers a little salt in her mashed potatoes or why most of us can't recall anything that happened before we were three-and-a-half years old. Because there is a lot of information, this is not one of the easiest books you will ever read, but it is eminently worthwhile.

I'll briefly mention that like many other reviewers, my book totally fell apart before I even read half of it. But that's not the author's fault. I had expected this book to be a year-by-year description from birth through age 5 of how a child's mind develops and how parents can nurture that development. I was quite wrong. This book covers a lot of in utero development from conception through about the seventh month of pregnancy and it touches on how long after birth these processes take to refine. The book also devotes a lot of attention to toxins and how they can affect the embryo or fetus. There is a break down of the five senses and how functional they are during pregnancy and infancy. The book reads much like biology and physiology textbooks I had in school. It also sites many studies using rats, monkeys, cats and children. If you are not interested in biology or the related

research, you may have a difficult time staying with this book. I do find biology interesting and I had to force myself to read certain sections. As I mentioned, I expected something far different than what I read in this book. I found about thirty pages of the first sixteen chapters and most of the seventeenth chapter had information that I could apply to the nurturing and development of my child. The book demonstrated that half of a child's IQ is inherited and half can be nurtured by getting directly involved with your child and his/her activities. This advice is not just for infants and toddlers. The author suggests staying involved through the teen years too. It also expressed that breastfed babies score about six points higher on IQ tests than babies who are not breastfed. One other interesting point - first born children are smarter than their siblings.

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