

Recommended Reading

Note: Since Preparation for Parenting is a religiously-based program and Babywise is a secular presentation of the same material, these recommended books reflect both religious and secular perspectives.

- ☞ Focus on the Family, *The Complete Book of Baby and Child Care* (Tyndale, 1998).
- ☞ Granju, Katie Allison, *Attachment Parenting* (Pocket Books, 1999).
- ☞ Heller, Sharon, Ph.D. *The Vital Touch* (Henry Holt & Co., 1997).
- ☞ Huggins, Kathleen, R.N. *The Nursing Mother's Companion* (Harvard Press, 1999).
- ☞ Hunter, Brenda, Ph.D. *The Power of Mother Love* (Waterbrook Press, 1997).
- ☞ Leman, Kevin, Ph.D. *Becoming the Parent God Wants You to Be*, (NavPress, 1998).
- ☞ Marasco, Lisa, B.A., I.B.C.L.C., and Jan Barger, M.A., R.N., I.B.C.L.C., "Examining the Evidence for Cue feeding of Breastfed Infants," <http://www.fix.net/~rprewett/evidence.html>.
- ☞ Sears, William, M.D. & Martha, R.N., *The Baby Book* (Little, Brown, 1993) and *The Complete Book of Christian Parenting and Child Care* (Broadman & Holman, 1997). Also: *Nighttime Parenting, The Fussy Baby, The Discipline Book*.
- ☞ Tamaro, Janet, *So That's What They're For* (Adams Media, 1998).
- ☞ Websites:
<http://www.ezzo.info>
<http://www.fix.net/~rprewett/fam3.html>

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Intrigued by the claims of
Babywise?

Piqued by
Preparation for Parenting?



Wondering about *scheduling*
your baby's feedings?

Thinking that baby should *sleep*
through the night by 8 weeks?

Concerned that *responsive*
parenting will spoil your child?

Considering whether it's okay to
let your baby "*cry it out*"?

Did you know...

That *Babywise* and *Preparation for Parenting* (“Prep”) have been criticized by hundreds of professionals in pediatric medicine, human lactation, psychology, anthropology, child development, and theology?¹ Or that problems have been associated with these programs—cases of slow weight gain, failure to thrive, depressed babies, even hospitalization?²

Consider These Risks

Hungry Babies

Breastfeeding your baby on a schedule may reduce your milk supply and contradicts the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), which has stated, “The best feeding schedules are the ones babies design themselves. Scheduled feedings designed by parents may put babies at risk for poor weight gain and dehydration.”³ The AAP recommends that newborns “be nursed whenever they show signs of hunger...approximately 8 to 12 times every 24 hours...” and states, “Crying is a late indicator of hunger.”⁴ Babies also need to go to the breast when they are thirsty, are in need of comfort, or don’t feel well.⁵

Clearly *Babywise*’s and *Prep*’s recommendations are not compatible with the AAP’s guidelines, despite claims that they are.

Stress & Low Weight Gain

Allowing your baby to “cry it out” increases his levels of cortisol, a hormone that indicates stress—which affects the baby’s ability to self calm. Excessive crying in the newborn interferes with normal bodily functions in every way, including gut tensing, heart pounding, increase in blood pressure, labored breathing, and disorientation. It can also affect weight gain through burning too many calories or becoming too fatigued to nurse effectively.⁶

***Babywise* and *Prep* have been criticized by hundreds of professionals from a broad spectrum of disciplines.**

Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo, self-proclaimed experts in parenting, have no training in child development, psychology, breastfeeding, or pediatric medicine.

Crying & Colic

Babies do not have the cognitive ability to understand why they are left alone to cry during scheduled sleep times or before feedings. Some may actually “shut down” and stop attempting to communicate even basic needs such as hunger, because they feel it is hopeless.⁷ On the surface, these may seem like “good” babies; in fact, they may be undernourished and/or depressed, with potential long-term negative effects on the relationship between parent and child.

Crying babies who are consistently responded to within ninety seconds end up crying 70%

less than babies whose parents allow them to cry for longer periods of time. This can certainly impact whether or not your baby develops “colic.”⁸

But It Sounds Good!

On *Becoming Babywise* and its church-based counterpart, *Preparation for Parenting*, promote a one-size-fits-all set of parent-centered rules for sleep, feedings, and wake time. Contrary to their claims, these precepts are potentially unhealthy for the child, and leave parents focused on the clock, the rules, and the book, rather than on what their individual baby needs in order to grow and develop physically and emotionally.

The primary authors of the materials,⁹ Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo, self-proclaimed experts in parenting,¹⁰ have no training in child development, psychology, breastfeeding, or pediatric medicine. Gary Ezzo holds neither an associate’s nor a bachelor’s degree from any college; his master of arts degree in Christian ministry includes credit for life experience. Anne Marie worked only briefly as an R.N. decades ago.¹¹

Check it out for yourself through the References and Recommended Reading in this brochure. You

will find that the advice in *Babywise* and *Prep* contradicts that of the vast majority of recognized authorities.

Healthy Parenting

Healthy, mature parenting is responding to *your* baby, meeting *your* baby’s needs, in a way your intuition tells you is right. A high-touch, attentive approach to parenting is enjoyable because it builds both confident parents and loving, sensitive, and connected kids. These babies are likely to become more securely attached to their parents and appropriately independent at the right developmental stage.¹²

There may be good points to be gleaned from *Babywise* and *Prep*. However, these good things may also be found in other, medically sound sources. The things that *are* unique to *Babywise* and *Prep* are *not* good—for either parents or babies.

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References

1. “Critiques and Commentaries of Concern Regarding Growing Families International”: <http://www.ezzo.info/bibliography.pdf>.
2. Rosin, Hanna, “A Tough Plan for Raising Children Draws Fire,” *The Washington Post*, February 27, 1999.
3. American Academy of Pediatrics Media Alert, April 20, 1998.
4. Policy statement: “Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk,” (RE9729) by the American Academy of Pediatrics, December 1997. <http://www.aap.org/policy/re9729.html>.
5. Lawrence, Ruth, *Breastfeeding: A Guide for the Medical Profession*. (Mosby, 1999), p. 185.
6. Anderson, G. C., R.N., Ph.D., “Risk in mother-infant separation postbirth,” *Image: Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 21:196-99, Winter, 1989.
7. Narramore, Bruce, Ph.D., *Help, I’m a Parent* (Zondervan, 1995), p. 56.
8. Taubman, B., M.D., “Clinical trial of the treatment of colic by modification of parent-infant interaction,” *Pediatrics*, 74:998, 1984.
9. Though a pediatrician is named as co-author of *Babywise*, its text is largely unchanged from *Preparation for Parenting*, which the Ezzos authored earlier.
10. “Striking Behavior—The Ezzos Sell Parents Some Tough Advice: Don’t Spare the Rod,” by Barbara Carton, *The Wall Street Journal*, February 17, 1998.
11. “More than a Parenting Ministry: The Cultic Characteristics of Growing Families International,” by Kathleen Turner and Elliot Miller, *Christian Research Journal*, April-June 1998, footnote 57, p. 45.
12. Karen, Robert, Ph.D., *Becoming Attached*, (Oxford University Press. NY, 1998) Chapter 12.