
This book sets out to be of interest to professionals in early education, medicine, child care, and child psychology. In attempting to cater to such a wide range of readers, there is a difficulty in that background information will differ in each group. The editors state that no previous knowledge of psychology is assumed. In addition, all subjects are treated in a basic and simple way that this text will be most suited to beginners in their discipline. Others will require more depth, irritated perhaps by oversimplification. That is more noticeable in the early chapters and the book improves as it goes on.

The topics covered include family relationships, social factors, development, language, behaviour disorders and their management (perhaps the best in the book), learning difficulties, play, failure to thrive, and child abuse—physical and sexual—together with a useful chapter summarising provisions for day care away from home and child care law.

Each chapter is followed by a reading list.

There is a general tendency throughout the book to equate disability and behaviour disorder with social disadvantage and while that is largely true, there are some problems for the well to do that here receive no mention.

I would like to see a version of the book written for more advanced readers. Meanwhile, some chapters will help junior staff preparing for the Diploma in Child Health. The book will have more appeal to non-medical readers in the field of child care.

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The title suggests a text book, but it is neither a text book nor a satisfactory reference book. To be fair it does not set out to be either but is simply a series of essays in 35 relatively short chapters. There are some distinguished authors, mostly from the Antipodes but also from North America, Britain, and Ireland.

Most chapters review advances and recent thought on broad topics. Practical detail is, inevitably, omitted and they are, therefore, more suited to browsing than use with specific clinical problems. Some important matters receive only a brief discussion—for example, retrolental fibroplasia and bronchopulmonary dysplasia are each discussed in six lines, and congenital hip dislocation and Perthes' disease even less—so brief that one is left wondering why they were mentioned at all.

As might be expected, the work of 40 contributors lends itself to a curate's egg effect. Some parts are good and I am pleased to say that the two chapters I liked best were from Britain. There were also good accounts of hypertension and hyperactivity, a thoughtful effort on accidental prevention, and some interesting data on childhood infections. Of most practical use were chapters on dermatology and ophthalmology, both well illustrated and keeping with the good standard of production of the book.

Disappointment prevailed on reading again about child abuse that 'has been present in society for many hundreds of years' but 'relatively newly recognised' by the medical profession. Likewise, with a rather wooly account of adolescence. Adolescent sexuality is rightly given a separate chapter but it contains little practical guidance on management and the issue of consent to contraception, so recently topical in Britain, is not even mentioned.

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This is a major new multiauthor two volume textbook from North America where paediatric dermatology is better established as a specialty than in the United Kingdom. The 32 chapters cover all aspects of paediatric dermatology, from the very common to very rare problems. The book's disadvantages are the relative lack of diagnostic and therapeutic advice (especially for congenital anomalies) and the patchy illustrations, many of which are in black and white.

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