Help for All Parents? Child-Rearing Advice in English Canada in the 1960s and 1970s

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Changes occurring in Canadian society during the 1960s and 1970s were poorly reflected in the child-rearing advice directed to English-Canadian parents. Despite the rise in the number of women working outside the home and feminist calls for a more equitable division of child care, experts only sometimes modified their advice to acknowledge this reality. In addition, the creation of the welfare state seemed to encourage child-rearing advisors to ignore class disparities. Finally, experts in this period rarely acknowledged any racial diversity in the Canadian population, despite an increasingly multicultural society. They continued to presume as the norm a white, Anglo-Saxon, middle-class family in which mothers remained the primary caregivers.

L'évolution de la société canadienne des années 1960 et 1970 se reflétait mal dans les conseils sur l'éducation des enfants à l'intention des parents canadiens-anglais. Malgré l'augmentation du nombre de femmes travaillant à l'extérieur du foyer et les appels des féministes à une division plus équitable de la garde des enfants, les experts ne modifiaient qu'à l'occasion leurs conseils en conséquence de cette réalité. De plus, la création de l'État providence semblait encourager les conseillers en éducation des enfants à ignorer les disparités entre les classes. Enfin, les experts de cette période ne reconnaissaient que rarement la diversité raciale au sein de la population canadienne malgré l'émergence d'une société de plus en plus multiculturelle. Ils perpétuaient la norme de la famille blanche et anglo-saxonne de classe moyenne dont la mère est la principale responsable du soin et de l'éducation des enfants.

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“TRUST YOURSELF, you know more than you think you do.”¹ Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, this line opened the now famous child-care book by American pediatrician Dr. Benjamin Spock. Despite this advice, Spock and other experts in these two decades clearly felt that, as in previous periods, parents still needed guidance. Popularly remembered as decades of great social change and ferment, the 1960s and 1970s in Canada witnessed the emergence of second-wave feminism, an exceptional rise in the number of mothers working outside the home, the consolidation of the welfare state, and increasing racial diversity.² There were some modifications to the advice offered to parents by leading experts. Yet much child-rearing advice continued to presume a white, middle-class, Anglo-Saxon family in which mothers remained the primary caregivers. Most prominently, experts in the 1960s and 1970s became increasingly enthusiastic about breast-feeding, despite the concerns of some feminists that it reduced the ability of both parents to participate in child-rearing. Experts continued to portray some tasks, including toilet training, as exclusively the mother’s responsibility, though they began to suggest that a crying child was a problem for both parents. Only rarely did experts modify their advice on feeding, sleeping, and toilet-training to reflect feminist critiques or the rising proportion of working mothers in Canada. On the question of racial and ethnic differences, child-rearing experts were also rather silent. Advice on baby feeding, in particular, suggested a uniform diet with little room for cultural or economic variation, and images printed in the books often implied a white audience.

A growing body of Canadian scholarship examines child-rearing advice in the twentieth century.³ Books by Cynthia Comacchio, Katherine Arnup, and Mona Gleason are particularly important to my analysis. Comacchio’s

1 Benjamin Spock, *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1962 [1957]), p. 3, *Baby and Child Care* (Markham: Simon & Schuster of Canada, 1975 [1968]), p. 3, and *Baby and Child Care* (Markham: Simon & Schuster Canada, 1976), p. 1. The 1962 manual I refer to throughout this article was actually a reprint of the 1957 edition. The same is true for Spock’s 1975 book, which was first published as a new edition in 1968. I still connect these books to 1962 and 1975, as this was the advice Spock continued to promulgate and present to new parents during these years.

2 This article focuses on these themes because of their importance to the period as well as their prominence in child-rearing advice. In making these choices, I am aware that I do not explore other important phenomena of the postwar period such as the decline in family size and the growth of suburbs.

This study covers child welfare campaigns in Ontario from 1900 to 1940, with an emphasis on the relationships among the medical profession, the state, and mothers. She argues that, as part of these campaigns, parenting advice in the interwar period became permeated with principles of scientific management that led to an “emphasis on ingrained discipline, clockwork regularity, and mechanical efficiency” in child-rearing. In these decades, children were to sleep, eat, and play on strict schedules devised by medical experts.\(^4\) Katherine Arnup likewise analyses advice from this period, tracking scientific motherhood, as it came to be called, of the 1920s and 1930s. However, Arnup is also interested in the post-World-War-II context. She ends her analysis in 1960, which allows an examination of “the dramatic shift in child-care advice from a rigid, health-oriented focus in the interwar years to the more relaxed, ‘permissive’ approach of the post-Second World War years.”\(^5\) Finally, Mona Gleason considers the child-rearing advice of postwar Canadian psychologists. Focusing mainly on the 1950s, Gleason argues that “the normal family that was constructed through psychological discourse was idealized and therefore largely unattainable; moreover it entrenched and reproduced the dominance of Anglo/Celtic (as opposed to ‘ethnic’), middle-class, heterosexual, and patriarchal values.”\(^6\) I build on the arguments of Gleason and Arnup in particular by examining what happened to mainstream expert advice into the 1960s and 1970s as social change accelerated in Canada.

This study analyses several key child-rearing manuals that were widely used in Canada, as well as advice printed in the popular magazine *Chatelaine*. First is Dr. Benjamin Spock’s *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*, which sold over 30 million copies between its appearance in 1946 and 1994. Though more precise publication data are hard to obtain, we do know that the test marketing of Spock’s book in 1946 sold 3,000 copies in Canada in six weeks.\(^7\) *The Canadian Mother and Child* was also very important as a more strictly Canadian source. First published in 1940, it was written by Dr. Ernest Couture, an obstetrician and chief of the federal government’s Division of Child and Maternal Health, part of the Department of National Health and Welfare.\(^8\) The 1960 version, used in this article, had changed little since it was first published in 1953, and Couture was still credited as the author, though he had actually left the department to return to private practice before the project was

\(^7\) Arnup, *Education for Motherhood*, p. 55.
\(^8\) Ibid., p. 186, n. 34; Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies*, p. 295, n. 38.
finished. Further modifications to this edition were completed by his successor Dr. Jean F. Webb and by Dr. B. D. B. Layton, Principal Medical Officer, Research Development. In the 1967 and 1979 editions, the entire Department of Health and Welfare Canada was credited as the author, in consultation with Canadian health and medical experts, rather than any one individual. More than 110,000 copies of the book were distributed each year from 1953 to 1967. When the fourth edition was released in 1979, its distribution averaged approximately 200,000 copies annually. Another influential expert for Canadian parents in the 1970s was British psychologist Dr. Penelope Leach. Her two successful books in this decade were *Babyhood: Infant Development from Birth to Two Years* and *Your Baby and Child*.

The magazine *Chatelaine* also offered child-rearing advice. *Chatelaine* began publication in 1928; by 1970, its English version had a circulation of 980,000, with newsstand sales of 70,000. *Chatelaine* was by far the most popular women’s magazine in Canada. In 1968, *Chatelaine* had a circulation of over 900,000 compared to *Family Circle*, the most popular American women’s magazine, which had only 410,275 Canadian sales per issue.

Analysing prescriptive literature raises many challenges for historians. It is difficult to determine whether advice was followed or even read.

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9 Dr. Ernest Couture, *The Canadian Mother and Child* (Ottawa: Department of National Health and Welfare, 1960 [1953]). As with Spock’s manuals, discussed above, the 1960 version of *The Canadian Mother and Child* was actually a reprint of an earlier edition. However, I assert it represented what the experts, in this case Dr. Couture at the Department of National Health and Welfare, wanted new parents to know in 1960.


14 “Leach, Penelope,” *Current Biography Yearbook* (1994), p. 325. Like Spock’s, Leach’s work crossed national lines and sold in large numbers on both sides of the Atlantic. For example, her *Your Baby and Child: From Birth to Age Five*, first published in 1977, had sold three million copies worldwide by 1994 and had been translated into 28 languages. Unfortunately, I could not locate any specific sales figures for Canada. That Leach was considered a well-known and popular expert in Canada is supported by frequent mention of her in national newspapers. For example, a *Toronto Star* columnist proclaimed in 1987, “If parents have only one book to guide them, then let it be Penelope Leach’s *Your Baby and Child, From Birth to Age Five* (Knopf). Yuppie parents have made Leach the latest baby guru.” Trish Crawford, “Bringing up Baby Without all the Fuss or Tears,” *Toronto Star*, December 5, 1987, p. M0A.


16 Ibid., p. 59.

However, as Mona Gleason argues, “Advice from experts, on any subject and in any time period, represents a cultural artefact in and of itself. Rather than assuming that it acted as a blueprint of how people actually behaved, we can see the advice of experts as revealing something of the cultural ideals and values presented to people, whether as parents, wives, husbands, sons, or daughters.”

Hence examining advice literature can enhance our understanding of a society’s culture.

Writing authoritatively during the 1960s and 1970s was not always easy for North American child-rearing experts. They had to be sensitive to the changing and varied needs of their audience while avoiding inconsistencies. I focus primarily on the advice given in these sources on infant feeding, sleeping, and toilet-training, some of the most basic aspects of child care that were consistently stressed by these experts.

Advice in these two decades continued to portray the mother as the primary caregiver, despite both the rise of women’s work outside the home and the emergence of a more vocal feminist movement. Experts also made assumptions about the racial and class composition of Canadian society that were reflected in their advice.

Second-wave Feminism and Questions of Child-rearing

Of the many changes occurring in Canadian society in the 1960s and 1970s, one might assume that the increasingly vocal second-wave feminist movement would have had the greatest impact on parenting advice. Issues and disputes concerning families and the maternal role pervaded the women’s movement in the 1960s and 1970s. In Canada, the 1970 Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women articulated one feminist position on child-rearing. The Commission’s broad mandate was to report on the condition of women in Canada and to recommend strategies to ensure greater sexual equality. The establishment of this Commission was the first visible success of second-wave feminism in Canada.

The Commission held hearings over a ten-month period, focused primarily on the experiences of Canadian women, and published its report in 1970. The report laid out four basic precepts that all touched upon child-rearing and sought to answer the demands of second-wave feminists:

18 Gleason, Normalizing the Ideal, p. 10.
20 In doing so, I am aware that I am excluding other topics such as play, physical growth, and mental development.
that women should be free to work outside the home or not and that society should facilitate such choices; that care of children was the equal responsibility of mothers, fathers, and society; that society needed to accord women special privileges on account of maternity; and that immediate, temporary measures were needed to counteract the sexual discrimination present in Canadian society. To achieve these comprehensive aims, the Commission made 167 more specific recommendations. These included the liberalization of abortion laws, increased maternity leave, a federally funded daycare system, and more accessible contraception.23

Most of the feminists who gave evidence considered government cooperation as the key to improving the status of Canadian women. These liberal or institutional feminists asserted that the main goal of the women’s movement was to ensure that women had access to the same opportunities as men. Other groups in Canada, as elsewhere, developed somewhat different agendas and strategies. Socialist feminists, as they came to be called, countered that “equality of opportunity can never be attained in Canadian society as long as there are fundamental differences in wealth, privilege, and power based on class, gender, sexual orientation, and race.” They believed that, in certain circumstances, men and women could work together to fight these inequities. Radical feminists also distrusted the existing social system, but tended to emphasize to a greater degree men’s patriarchal power and the conflictual nature of relations between the sexes. For them, men and women were fundamentally different, and society should be restructured around female values.24 In addition to these emerging segments within feminism, lesbians, women of colour, and immigrants argued increasingly throughout the 1970s that the women’s movement did not represent them or speak to their issues.25

Thus, across the continent, feminism was, in the 1960s and 1970s, a complex and divided movement. Disagreements extended into interpretations of motherhood as a female role. As part of a more general critique of patriarchy and the nuclear family, some feminists viewed pregnancy and motherhood in negative, confining terms.26 In particular, they argued that

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stay-at-home mothers were economically vulnerable and that the focus of the women’s movement should therefore be on securing the equitable access of all women to the paid work force. American feminist writer Ann Snitow affirms that, from 1963 to about 1974, critiques such as Betty Friedan’s The Feminine Mystique and Shulamith Firestone’s The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution focused on the more negative aspects of childbearing. Firestone went so far as to call pregnancy barbaric. Snitow suggests that, after 1974, feminism entered a period of intense exploration of motherhood, which was sometimes misread as an attack on housewives. This phase was associated strongly with American writer and feminist Adrienne Rich, who, in her very influential 1976 book Of Woman Born, argued that much of the institution of motherhood, in contrast to biological mothering, had been historically under oppressive male control. Rich argued that patriarchal structures could not change and, consequently, wanted women to create a more autonomous female sphere for child-rearing. Other feminists such as Dorothy Dinnerstein called on men to embrace “traditional” feminine nurturing. This strand of feminism in the 1970s emphasized partnership in parenting, an attitude adopted to a large degree by the 1970 Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. In sum, as Deborah Gorham and Florence Kellner Andrews suggest, feminists were profoundly divided regarding motherhood:

On the one hand, there are those [feminists] who emphasize the importance of freeing mothers from the sole responsibility for nurturing the young, and who see this pattern of nurturance as the root cause of misogyny in all human societies. On the other hand, there are those who emphasize women’s special nature as mother, and who wish to strengthen what they see as a unique women’s moral and social culture.

The question of breast-feeding was a particularly marked site of ambivalence and contradiction for feminists. While some supported the method as natural and liberating, others expressed concern about its impact on

29 Ibid., p. 39; Arnup, Education for Motherhood, p. 5.
30 Ward, La Leche League, p. 76.
women’s autonomy. For example, the popular 1978 version of the feminist health book Our Bodies, Ourselves commented, “The propagandists would have us believe that if we breast feed we are good and if we bottle feed we are bad. They do not take into account the possible disastrous effects of a mother feeding her baby in a way she does not wish or cannot do.” Some feminists were also concerned that breast-feeding made the baby more exclusively the mother’s responsibility. In a good summary of the transnational debate, a 1980 article in the British feminist magazine Spare Rib commented,

The move towards natural childbirth and support in breastfeeding, with medical and technological help (including formula milk) always available is a move towards reclaiming our bodies and deciding for ourselves what shapes we want to be and how our reproductive powers are to be used…. But we aren’t all clear and united about the question of breastfeeding as a part of childcare. Some women have said in discussion that it contradicts all our efforts to make childcare something that can be shared by men and women on equal terms.

Thus feminists were divided on the place of motherhood in women’s lives. While some rejected the maternal role, others argued that both men and women should embrace their nurturing sides and share parenting duties more equally. This idea of partnership in parenting, espoused by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, was not completely without precedent. It had been articulated, though in a different form, by Canadian psychologists in the 1950s, concerned that mothers, who would still provide most childcare, could be overbearing. Fathers were told to step in to balance these tendencies, especially with older children. In particular, fathers were to ensure the proper adherence to gender and sexual roles. Psychologists in the 1950s were thus proposing that childcare duties be divided in new ways. Women were to take care of the physical needs of babies and toddlers, while men were to take a more active role in guiding older children. Some feminists in the 1960s and 1970s repudiated this rigid division of labour and pushed for fathers to be more involved at all stages

37 Gleason, Normalizing the Ideal, pp. 66–69, 98.
of parenting. However, child-rearing experts were reluctant to let go of their assumption that mothers remained the primary caregivers.

**Child Rearing Advice on Breast-feeding**
Did experts endorse breast-feeding in the 1960s and 1970s, despite some feminists’ expressed concerns that the method limited female autonomy? Breast-feeding rates certainly increased in Canada throughout the period under review. Studies note that, in 1963, only 38 per cent of mothers in Canada even initiated breast-feeding. By 1982, this proportion had increased to 75 per cent. It is unclear whether experts simply responded to this trend or more actively perpetuated it.\(^{38}\) Scholars have analysed numerous factors in the shift back towards breast-feeding, including scientific developments, the influence of La Leche League, and the natural childbirth movement.\(^{39}\) In particular, in the 1970s, scientists increased their understanding of the immunological properties of breast milk. All of these factors may have influenced more women to try breast-feeding.\(^{40}\)

Experts throughout the 1960s and 1970s articulated a marked preference for breast- over bottle-feeding. In this, they were closer to the strand of feminism that emphasized breast-feeding as an essential part of womanhood. They may also have been responding to the influence of another female organization, La Leche League, formed in Chicago in 1956 to help mothers breast-feed.\(^{41}\) By 1972, there were 80 groups in Canada.\(^{42}\) The founders of La Leche League were seven middle-class mothers who, by successfully breast-feeding their babies, were atypical in the United States. Bottle-feeding predominated there, as in Canada, during the 1950s.\(^{43}\) At La Leche League meetings, women received emotional support as well as information on the advantages of breast-feeding, specific nursing techniques, childbirth, the role of the father, and nutrition.\(^{44}\) In general, along with its strong advocacy of

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breast-feeding, “[a]t the heart of the La Leche League’s philosophy was the notion that the needs of the infant — as interpreted by the mother rather than a doctor — should determine the practice and pace of mothering.” In particular, La Leche League promoted prolonged breast-feeding and argued firmly that the child should determine when weaning would begin.

As Katherine Arnup has established, Canadian experts throughout the twentieth century had recommended breast-feeding whenever possible. Especially prior to refrigeration and sterilized formula, nursing was safer. In addition, many experts stressed that nursing was superior simply because it was natural and breast milk was intended for the baby. At the same time, though, in recognition of the rising popularity of bottle-feeding, the medical establishment, while blaming working mothers for failing to nurse, did support bottle-feeding if it was carried out under a doctor’s supervision. In her analysis of why bottle-feeding had become more common during the 1950s, Arnup suggests,

Despite their proclamations on the value of breast-feeding, manuals increasingly included sufficient information to enable women to select the option of bottle-feeding. In light of the prevailing reverence for science, it seems likely that mothers could have viewed the detailed photographs and instructions as a silent endorsement of the more “scientific” method of bottle-feeding and might well have opted for that method in preference to the “natural” approach of breast-feeding.

In contrast to this potentially ambiguous message, North American experts in the 1960s and 1970s became much more decisive and enthusiastic about breast-feeding. They also became more explicitly negative towards bottle-feeding.

Experts continued to argue for the naturalness of breast-feeding into the 1970s. In 1960, Dr Couture, author of _The Canadian Mother and Child_, was still asserting that breast-milk was the ideal food for any baby. Spock shared this idea, saying in his 1962 _The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care_ that breast-feeding was natural: “On general principle, it’s safer to do things the natural way unless you are absolutely sure you have a better way.” The fourth edition of _The Canadian Mother and Child_, published in 1979, argued that a baby’s food should

46 Ibid.
47 Arnup, _Education for Motherhood_, pp. 96–98.
48 Comacchio, _Nations are Built of Babies_, pp. 121–122.
50 _The Canadian Mother and Child_ (1960), p. 76.
51 Spock, _The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care_, p. 63.
meet all dietary requirements and, therefore, “Toward these ends, greater attention is now being given to encourage and help mothers to breastfeed their infants.” Couture’s successors stated, “Breast milk is so good that some authorities say it is the only food a baby really needs up to 4 or even 6 months of age.”

After having stressed the naturalness and suitability of breast milk for infant consumption, most manuals then listed other advantages of breast-feeding. Such lists reveal, first, the experts’ preference for breast-feeding and, secondly, a subtle increase in that endorsement over the two decades under review. In general, experts maintained that breast-feeding was more economical, convenient, sterile, psychologically better for both mother and baby, and helpful physically to the mother.

Perhaps of all the experts, Penelope Leach in 1975 was the most balanced in her discussion of infant feeding. Though she agreed that breast-feeding had many benefits such as facilitating travel and night feeding, she was careful to list an almost equal number of advantages associated with bottle-feeding. Just three years later, the scales had tipped slightly. Leach added to the benefits of nursing, stating that this method would help the mother lose her pregnancy weight. Similarly, the 1979 *The Canadian Mother and Child* suggested for the first time, “Breast feeding tends to reduce the chances of over-feeding the infant as he will stop feeding when he is satisfied, whereas bottle fed babies are often encouraged to draw the last drop from the bottle.” Increasingly, experts tended to minimize any disadvantages to nursing. Only Leach mentioned that nursing made it impossible to tell how much the baby had eaten and that this method linked the mother’s health and diet to the quantity and quality of the milk.

Experts’ discussions of bottle-feeding in these two decades became increasingly negative, as their preference for nursing became more emphatic. In the 1960 *The Canadian Mother and Child*, Couture instructed bottle-feeding mothers never to “prop up his bottle and leave him to eat alone. Always take time to spend twenty minutes five times a day to give your baby the comfort and companionship he needs.”

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57 Leach, *Babyhood*, pp. 44–47, and *Your Baby and Child*, p. 49.
concern centred on children missing the physical contact that came automatically with breast-feeding. In the 1967 edition, the advice was modified in an interesting way. Couture’s successors explained that parents should “[n]ever prop the bottle and leave the baby when he is very small as he may choke on his feeding. He needs company at meals just like anyone else.”59 This time, the authors coupled a need for company with a physical threat to the baby, painting a more negative picture of bottle-feeding. A 1970 article in *Chatelaine* also articulated a more explicit rejection of bottle-feeding than in previous years. Dr. Johanne Bentzon outlined many of the advantages of breast milk already discussed, such as it being convenient, fresh, sterile, and cheap. Overall, Bentzon concluded, “Mothers who, after careful consideration, choose not to breast-feed need not feel guilty, but those who want to should be given every encouragement.”60 Though the author seemed here to be exonerating mothers who did not breast-feed, she then stated that there were rarely physical obstacles to breast-feeding, implying that few mothers faced any real impediment to nursing. She added that many formulas were good and convenient, but also expensive, and that bottle-fed babies should never be left alone with a propped bottle.61 Dr. Spock had advised against propping a bottle as early as 1962, but his opinion was not as strong as Bentzon’s. He said, “I agree that it does no harm for a loving but busy mother to prop some of the bottles if she can make it up to the baby in other ways.”62

The 1979 edition of *The Canadian Mother and Child* tended, like Bentzon, to discuss the option of formula-feeding in an increasingly negative way. The manual suggested that, even in the days of refrigeration and sterilization, formulas could still cause vomiting, diarrhoea, and colic in babies. The writers also pointed out that overly sweet formulas could contribute to nutritional and dental problems.63 Mothers were advised to be very careful to ensure that formula was kept safe and clean. Though this same advice was found as early as 1960 in Couture’s manual, its placement in the text had changed significantly. Rather than being buried in the middle of the section on formula preparation, as before, in the 1979 *The Canadian Mother and Child*, these comments appeared more prominently at the start of the section on bottle-feeding.64 This edition added that

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60 Dr. Johanne Bentzon, “Feeding Your Baby,” *Chatelaine*, vol. 43, no. 4 (April 1970), p. 113. Dr. Bentzon had become a regular contributor to *Chatelaine* in 1965 as a medical expert on children’s health issues. She was also, as she affirmed in a 1968 article, a mother.
61 Ibid., pp. 113–114.
62 Spock, *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*, pp. 117–118. It is unclear what Spock meant by a busy mother. He may have simply been referring to the demanding nature of housework and child-care rather than women’s possible work outside the home.
formula should never be left out of the fridge for more than a few minutes; otherwise bacteria could grow. In this way, the writers of *The Canadian Mother and Child* were similar to other experts of this period who promoted breast-feeding by increasingly highlighting the problematic aspects of bottle-feeding. The shift in advice occurred without any explicit acknowledgment of the claim of some feminists that nursing made the baby the mother’s responsibility.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that, from the 1950s on, some experts occasionally admitted that bottle-feeding allowed others, especially the father, to help feed the baby. For instance, the 1960 *The Canadian Mother and Child*, which generally favoured breast-feeding, did present “[o]ne advantage of bottle-feeding” as being “that it gives Daddy a chance to feed the baby occasionally, and this helps develop a happy relationship between father and baby.” The same statement appeared in the 1967 version of the manual. Interestingly, in the 1979 edition, this significant advantage of bottle-feeding was omitted, even though it retained a picture of a father giving a bottle to the baby. This change perhaps suggested not a movement away from the idea of partnership in parenting, expressed firmly by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women and supported by feminists, but simply a reflection of the growing popularity of breast-feeding and the reluctance of experts to highlight the advantages of other methods. Experts in this period had to be sensitive to the practices and needs of their audience.

**Working Mothers and Infant Feeding**
The labour force participation of Canadian mothers with only pre-school children went from 19 to 29 per cent between 1967 and 1973. By 1978, 41.2 per cent of mothers with children under six years old were working outside the home. Responding to the rise of working mothers, in 1971

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70 Michael Krashinsky, *Day Care and Public Policy in Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 8. In the same years, the labour force of mothers with only full-time school children increased from 28 to 42 per cent and that of mothers with both school-age and pre-school children from 15 to 26 per cent.
the Canadian federal government amended the *Unemployment Insurance Act* to cover employees absent from work for pregnancy and childbirth.\(^{72}\)

In addition, “by the end of the 1970s, all provinces had passed laws entitling women employees to at least seventeen weeks of unpaid maternity leave.”\(^{73}\) The number of Canadian maternity benefit claimants went from 37,688 in 1972 to 107,336 in 1980.\(^{74}\)

Given the increase in the proportion of working mothers, one might expect child-rearing manuals of the 1960s and 1970s, which were still primarily written for a female audience, to display greater sensitivity to this reality. Yet experts rarely re-oriented their books in this way, and much of the advice in these two decades continued to presume a mother at home.\(^{75}\) Only in advice about breast-feeding was there some acknowledgement of working mothers. Perhaps, at least in the Canadian context of the 1970s, experts were assuming that most women would be at home for a certain period due to maternity leave.\(^{76}\)

When working mothers were acknowledged, they were encouraged to breast-feed whenever possible. For example, Spock observed in 1962, as he had in the 1946 first edition of his manual, that breast-feeding was not very popular, due in part, he suggested, to women working outside the home. He acknowledged that a woman might hesitate to breast-feed if she had to go back to work right away. However, he maintained, despite this reality, “If she has to be out of the home only 8 hours a day, she can still nurse her baby except for one feeding. Even if she can’t nurse after she resumes work, it would still be worth while to breast-feed the baby temporarily if she has a month or two.”\(^{77}\) In what may be an oblique allusion to arguments that breast-feeding dominated a woman’s life, the authors of the 1967 *The Canadian Mother and Child* stated that “[nursing] may seem to be demanding of mother’s time, that

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\(^{72}\) Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, p. 87. The Commission recommended the adoption of provincial and maternity legislation to entitle employed women to 18 weeks’ maternity leave.


\(^{75}\) Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal*, pp. 54–55, 78. Gleason also finds that, according to the psychological discourse of the 1950s and despite the rise of married women in the paid work force, “normal women were depicted as full-time wives and mothers.”


is to tie her down, but actually most mothers want to provide most of the
care for their babies in the early months.\textsuperscript{78} Spock repeated in his 1975 and
1976 manuals that a working mother could still nurse.\textsuperscript{79}

Dr. Penelope Leach, like Spock, acknowledged the existence of working
mothers but still encouraged them to breast-feed. In 1978 she suggested
that, if mothers planned “to go back to work within a few weeks of the
birth, then obviously you will have to use a bottle. But you might still
want to breast-feed while you can.”\textsuperscript{80} The writers of the 1979 \textit{The
Canadian Mother and Child} also discussed working mothers. They lamen-
ted that many Canadian women were still choosing not to nurse and attrib-
uted this decision to, among other factors, the incidence of women
working outside the home.\textsuperscript{81} This statement, which was not found in
earlier editions, may have been a response to the increase in the pro-
portion of women working for wages. Its inclusion, though not really pro-
viding any constructive suggestions for the working mother, did reflect an
awareness of this phenomenon.

Surprisingly, given their enthusiasm for breast-feeding, experts in this
period did not advise working mothers to express milk or to use breast
pumps so that they could more easily combine paid work with breast-
feeding.\textsuperscript{82} Experts in the 1960s and 1970s were clearly aware of the exist-
ence of this technology and did advocate its use in other circumstances.
For example, in 1960 and 1967, \textit{The Canadian Mother and Child} suggested
that mothers might express breast milk to ease the initial irritation of
nursing or the later discomfort of rapid weaning. In 1960, the book men-
tioned pumps explicitly in its section on weaning, stating, “The tension
may become so great that you may have to use a breast pump to relieve
it.”\textsuperscript{83} Only in 1979 did Couture’s successors allude to the additional flexi-
bility this technology might give mothers. Though they did not explicitly
refer to paid employment, they did suggest, “If it is necessary to leave
the baby at feeding time or if you wish to do so occasionally, make the
same formula in about the amount you think he will take. You may use

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{The Canadian Mother and Child} (1967), p. 87.
\textsuperscript{79} Spock, \textit{Baby and Child Care} (1975), p. 75, and \textit{Baby and Child Care} (1976), p. 96.
\textsuperscript{80} Leach, \textit{Your Baby and Child}, p. 48.
\textsuperscript{81} \textit{The Canadian Mother and Child} (1979), pp. 150–151.
\textsuperscript{82} For more on the history of breast pumps, see Maia Boswell-Penc and Kate Boyer, “Expressing
Anxiety? Breast Pump Usage in American Wage Workplaces,” \textit{Gender, Place and Culture}, vol. 14,
no. 5 (October 2007), pp. 551–567.
Interestingly, in 1960 the manual suggested a breast pump might be necessary to decrease the
mother’s discomfort during rapid weaning but says nothing about using manual expression of
milk to help prevent nipple irritation at the start of breast-feeding. The authors did advise the
latter in 1967, however, then said that nursing the baby occasionally, rather than using a breast
pump, would help eliminate pressure during rapid weaning.
your breast milk; if so express it into a clean, sterile bottle."\(^84\) It is curious that only in 1960, and not in later editions, did the authors of *The Canadian Mother and Child* include breast pumps in this discussion.

In all three editions, Spock suggested pumping breast milk into bottles could be helpful in the case of a premature baby or an ill mother.\(^85\) He also added that expressing some milk could reduce pain for the mother during weaning.\(^86\) Likewise, in 1978, Penelope Leach suggested that expressing some milk would stimulate production and help nursing, yet did not mention breast pumps.\(^87\) Spock included a short discussion of breast pump types with his advice.\(^88\) However, neither Spock nor Leach suggested that breast pumps could allow working mothers to breast-feed more easily.

Thus experts in this period did allude to the rising incidence of working mothers in Canadian society and also, on occasion, to the feminist argument that breast-feeding could tie a woman to the home, away from career opportunities. However, with the exception of Spock and Leach, few discussed how working outside the home might have an impact on infant feeding. Even while acknowledging that outside work was somewhat incompatible with nursing, experts quickly moved on from this point, writing as if this one complication could not possibly outweigh all the advantages associated with breast-feeding. They also did not instruct working mothers on using breast pumps, perhaps suggesting their preference for both exclusive breast-feeding and at-home mothers.

**The Crying Infant: A Job for Both Parents?**

With the rise in the proportion of women working outside the home, did the advice in the 1960s and 1970s portray a more equitable division of domestic duties, including child care? Many feminists certainly wished to see a more equal distribution of parenting tasks. They argued that “women had retained responsibility for the household and family at the same time as their participation in the paid labour force had increased massively, reaching the previous wartime peak in 1967.” Political scientist Naomi Black attributes the emergence of second-wave feminism, in part, to this “double shift” in women’s labour.\(^89\)

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\(^{84}\) *The Canadian Mother and Child* (1979), p. 149.


\(^{87}\) Leach, *Your Baby and Child*, p. 59.


Experts in the 1960s and 1970s increasingly presented a crying baby as a situation in which both parents could participate, a stance that might have reflected feminist demands for more equitable parenting. In contrast to psychologists of the 1950s, some feminists in this period asserted that both parents should be involved with their children from the beginning. Fathers were not to remain aloof from the physical needs of the baby. Yet, in 1960, Couture was still cautioning that infants’ crying for attention “has made slaves of many a mother.”\textsuperscript{90} The Canadian Mother and Child included the same warning in 1967.\textsuperscript{91} As was clear in their titles, these earlier manuals were geared towards mothers and assumed a secondary, albeit supportive, role for fathers. For example, in the foreword to the 1960 The Canadian Mother and Child, G. D. W. Cameron, deputy minister of national health, explained, “Fathers, too, who read this book — as I trust all fathers will — might feel that they have been somewhat neglected. True, this book is mainly for mothers, but — in the months before birth and for years after — the father’s understanding and loving care is essential to the health and happiness of both mother and child.”\textsuperscript{92} This sentiment was repeated in the 1967 edition.\textsuperscript{93}

In 1962 Spock seemed to assume that, though both parents would be bothered by incessant crying, it was primarily the mother who would deal with an irritable or colicky baby. He wrote that, in response to periodic irritable crying, “[the baby’s] mother changes him, turns him over, gives him a drink of water, but nothing works for long.” He stated that “parents” might get frustrated with colic, but then made it clear that “parents” was synonymous with mothers: “If you can admit the feeling and laugh about it with your husband, you will be able to stand it more comfortably.” Spock did advise that perhaps the father could look after a colicky baby one or two evenings a week so that the mother, clearly the primary caregiver, could have a break.\textsuperscript{94} A 1962 Chatelaine article by Dr. Chant Robertson agreed that colic was “dreadfully hard on [the baby’s] parents. . . . There’s no reason why both you and your husband should suffer every evening: be wise and spell each other off at least twice a week.”\textsuperscript{95} Spock suggested in 1962 that both mother and father could spoil a baby with too much attention and play. Here again, his solution lay with the mother, who was instructed to establish a firm schedule of housework during the day and only pick up the baby at certain times.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{90} The Canadian Mother and Child (1960), p. 117.
\textsuperscript{91} The Canadian Mother and Child (1967), p. 145.
\textsuperscript{92} The Canadian Mother and Child (1960), p. 3.
\textsuperscript{93} G. D. W. Cameron, “Foreword,” The Canadian Mother and Child (1967).
\textsuperscript{94} Spock, The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care, pp. 178, 181–182.
\textsuperscript{96} Spock, The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care, pp. 183–185
There is no mention of what the father might do to rectify this problem. For Spock, in his 1962 edition, it was the mother who put the wakeful toddler firmly back to bed.97 In the 1960s, mothers were attributed the ultimate responsibility for crying or wakeful children. Spock’s manual remained virtually unchanged between 1968 and 1975 in its advice on infant crying. It was mother who was understood to comfort the irritable baby, who needed to confide her frustration over a colicky baby to her husband, who had to “unspoil” a child too used to being picked up, and who had to ensure toddlers remained in bed.98 The same year, Penelope Leach also assigned mothers responsibility for the crying infant. In contrast to Spock’s concern about spoiling children with too much attention, Leach acknowledged that many mothers were upset by crying but suggested that “how long an infant cries reflects the length of time it takes his mother to attend to him and find out what he needs.” She stated further that, from six weeks to three months, some babies “cry for comparatively long periods in the day because their mothers deliberately delay fulfilling their expressed needs for fear of spoiling them.” Though usually using the words “parents” and “mother” synonymously, Leach in 1975 did state “Even if the actual number of minutes the mother or father must spend awake with the child is small . . . disturbances of sleep . . . are exhausting.”99 She appeared to accept that fathers might get up with the baby at night.

In 1976, Spock changed the wording of his advice in significant ways. His advice about frustration with colic was now, “If you can admit the feeling and laugh about it with your spouse, you will be able to stand it more comfortably.” He also added that, in regard to bedtime difficulties with toddlers, “parents” rather than “mothers” should only allow the child one trip to the bathroom and one glass of water.100 Though he still used the word mother most often, there was a new recognition that both parents might be involved. Leach likewise in her 1978 book suggested more explicitly how parents might share tasks. For example, she discussed whether parents should take turns getting up at night with the baby, but concluded,

Breast-feeding mothers usually decide that a snack and a chat is not enough compensation for having a husband who is exhausted too. Most of them prefer to manage alone and perhaps get paid back with afternoon naps on the weekends. Bottle-feeding parents sometimes work out a sharing system, with one parent doing one night and the other the next. But for many couples even that does not work because the mother finds that she

97 Ibid., p. 351.
99 Leach, Babyhood, pp. 73, 108, 286.
100 Spock, Baby and Child Care (1976), pp. 222, 391.
wakes up anyway. If she cannot get back to sleep until she knows the baby is settled again, she might as well give the feeding herself.101

Even though Leach seemed to affirm here that mothers often did the night feedings, this discussion shows a recognition that fathers could be involved, too. She also suggested that parents should take turns going to visit older babies if they were upset and noted that, in the mornings, “the baby has learned that when he has been awake in the morning, either his mother or his father will come to greet him and get him up.”102 Leach added that babies wake more often at night if their parents pick them up less during the day.102 Earlier advice had used the word “mothers” rather than “parents.”103 The Canadian Mother and Child from 1979 also reflected changes in its intended audience. The introduction now read, “Content is directed to both men and women, reinforcing the concept of shared responsibilities in parenting and child rearing. Some material, of necessity, refers directly to the woman; nevertheless, men are encouraged to become knowledgeable in the whole field of pregnancy, labour and childbirth, as well as infant care.” Perhaps reflecting this significant shift in the introductory material, the 1979 edition, though not referring explicitly to the father, did not contain the statement that babies who cry for attention enslave mothers in particular.104 Over the 1970s, then, experts seem to have made a more self-conscious effort to discuss the role of fathers in soothing upset or wakeful infants. Increasingly, the word “parents” referred to both mother and father.

Toilet-training: A Mother’s Task
In previous periods, experts had almost always assumed that toilet training, along with most other aspects of child care, would be carried out by mothers.105 This trend would continue into the 1960s and 1970s, despite the increase in the proportion of mothers working outside the home. The father remained a shadowy figure with no concrete role in actual training. For example, in 1962 Chatelaine columnist Dr. Alton Goldbloom wrote, “It’s best if the mother behaves toward the child as if a bowel movement is merely a natural, necessary part of life, like eating and sleeping.”106 Dr. Johanne Bentzon echoed this sentiment in 1966; “Easygoing mothers who encourage their children in an amiable way, and are prepared to wait patiently for a child to develop good toilet habits are not likely to run into

101 Leach, Your Baby and Child, p. 94.
102 Ibid., pp. 220, 232, 221.
103 Leach, Babyhood, p. 285.
104 The Canadian Mother and Child (1979), pp. 20, 220.
105 Arnup, Education for Motherhood, pp. 6, 40.
major problems. Overanxious mothers who worry their children constantly and make a big issue of toilet training often invite the very problems they are trying to avoid.”

This emphasis on the pivotal and potentially negative role of the mother in training rather than the father or the parents continued into the 1970s. In his 1975 edition, Spock advised, “Ease in training depends a great deal on a mother taking advantage of the stages of her child’s readiness.” The implication was that the mother should correctly observe and interpret this readiness to help the child effectively. Pursuant to this line of reasoning, Spock discussed a research study (not included in his 1962 manual) in which he was involved at an unnamed clinic. According to Spock, the team followed the toilet-training progress of a group of children and found that mothers, wishing to avoid conflict with their children, often misread signs of readiness such as an awareness of a coming movement, discomfort with being in a soiled state, and pleasure in not wearing diapers. He concluded, “The staff became convinced that the commonest block to training in America today is this fear of arousing hostility in children.”

Here again was the implication that problems in toilet-training could largely be attributed to mothers, though Spock did acknowledge that their fears of confrontation might often be stimulated by parent educators like himself. References to the mother as the primary trainer remained prevalent to the end of the period. The 1979 *The Canadian Mother and Child* commented, “Trying to observe the baby’s rhythm and putting him on the pot at the right time does not help the toilet training of the baby as much as training the mother to anticipate the movement.”

Spock offered the only exception to this tendency to ignore fathers in toilet-training advice. In his 1975 manual, he continued to maintain that training problems could be attributed to the mother, but suggested a stereotypical role for fathers. When attaching a baby’s toilet seat to the regular toilet, he wrote, “The father should also build a steady box-shaped structure to serve as a step, so that the child can learn to climb up on the seat by himself.” A year later, Spock modified the wording

108 Spock, *Baby and Child Care* (1975), pp. 249, 258–259; Thomas Maier, *Dr. Spock: An American Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), p. 215. Though Spock did not provide any other explicit details on this study, it most likely occurred at his Child Rearing Study. Spock established this programme in 1958 at the Western Reserve University in Cleveland. Staffed by a group of psychiatrists and pediatricians, it was to serve as a practical assessment of Spock’s advice on a variety of topics, including toilet-training. The team monitored approximately 30 children from infancy to adolescence.
to say that “parents” should build a step.\textsuperscript{111} This may have been part of Spock’s new attempt to purge his book of sexism in response to feminist criticism.\textsuperscript{112} His preface to the 1976 edition explicitly acknowledged such criticism:

The main reason for this 3rd revision (4th edition) of Baby and Child Care is to eliminate the sexist biases of the sort that help to create and perpetuate discrimination against girls and women…. I always assumed that the parent taking the greater share of the care of young children (and of the home) would be the mother, whether or not she wanted an outside career. Yet it’s this almost universal assumption that leads to women feeling a much greater compulsion than men to sacrifice a part of their careers in order that the children will be well cared for. Now I recognize that the father’s responsibility is as great as the mother’s.\textsuperscript{113}

Spock’s new use of the word “parents” throughout his 1976 book was exceptional. Most discussions of toilet-training during the 1970s burdened mothers with a large sense of responsibility for their children’s success or failure. This occurred despite the growing extent of their employment outside the home and calls for more partnership in parenting. In these discussions, experts, with the exception of Spock, often seemed to use the terms “mothers” and “parents” interchangeably. Fathers were seldom presented as active and autonomous participants.\textsuperscript{114} Perhaps this tendency continued because experts still assumed, as psychologists had in the 1950s, that women were the primary caregivers of small children and would certainly continue to carry out the more unpalatable tasks such as toilet-training, even if fathers could be persuaded to help in other ways.

The Welfare State: The Creation of Equal Families
Much of the child-rearing advice of the 1960s and 1970s represented mothers as the primary caregivers, despite some feminist arguments and the rise of women’s work outside the home. Did other changes, like the consolidation of the Canadian welfare state, have a more decisive impact on the advice? Following World War II, the federal government began to implement new forms of social security, beginning with family allowances. Throughout the postwar period, public pressure mounted for such programmes. In response, and perhaps most famously, the federal government

\textsuperscript{111} Spock, Baby and Child Care (1976), p. 289.
\textsuperscript{112} Maier, Dr. Spock, pp. 353–354.
\textsuperscript{113} Spock, Baby and Child Care (1976), p. xix.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., pp. 288–291. In this new edition, Spock replaced “mothers” with “parents” and suggested using Daddy or Mommy as examples of proper toilet behaviour. However, it remained unclear whether the father was actually involved in the training or was simply being held up as a role model for male children.
implemented the *Medical Care Act* to offer equal cost-sharing to the provinces and universal, transferable, and comprehensive health insurance to all Canadians.\(^{115}\)

Poverty persisted in postwar Canada, despite these welfare measures. A study in 1961 by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, predecessor of Statistics Canada, calculated the minimum income required for housing, food, clothing, medical care, and unforeseen costs. It concluded that 27 per cent of urban Canadians lived below this line. A similar study by the National Council of Welfare in 1975 “found that 21.2 per cent of Canadian children growing up in two-parent family households were living in poverty.” This number climbed to 69.1 per cent in female-headed homes. Increases in both the country’s gross national product and the number of married women in the labour market suggest that overall poverty rates dropped from 27 per cent in 1961 to 15.4 per cent in 1975. According to historian Alvin Finkel, the years from 1945 to 1980 also marked the peak of federal government commitments, through programmes like the Canadian Assistance Plan, to create economic equality among Canadians.\(^{116}\)

Thus government welfare programmes, a thriving economy, and the relative decline of poverty may have contributed to the tendency of the media and politicians throughout the Cold War to reject the idea that poverty continued to be a problem in Canada.\(^{117}\) Advice in child-rearing manuals certainly furthered the illusion that class distinctions and income variations were no longer significant in Canadian society. In earlier periods, parenting advice had sporadically acknowledged class disparities. Both Katherine Arnup and Cynthia Comacchio argue that child-rearing advice from the interwar decades displayed a middle-class bias. According to Arnup, experts often urged pregnant women to have regular pre-natal care but seldom admitted that many could not afford it.\(^{118}\) Comacchio affirms that “because of the middle-class outlook conveyed by the literature, the applicability of much of its advice to the working-class family is questionable.”\(^{119}\) In contrast, Dominique Marshall’s study of the welfare state in post-World-War-II Quebec shows that government advice, included with family allowance cheques, expressed awareness of varying income levels.\(^{120}\)

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116 Ibid., pp. 250–1, 258, 270, 274.
117 Ibid., p. 250.
118 Arnup, *Education for Motherhood*, p. 147.
119 Comacchio, *Nations are Built of Babies*, p. 211.
Class as a category appeared rarely in the advice manuals that I have analyzed. As Nancy Pottishman Weiss argues regarding the work of Spock, “The advice presumes a catalogue of belongings and a set of relationships: telephones, refrigerators, a pest and rodent free home in adequate repair, accessible physicians.... The larder is filled with food, the ‘feeding problems’ being the recalcitrant child, not an inadequate food supply.” 121 One of the few references to class I found was in a 1963 Chatelaine article by Dr. Alton Goldbloom. Written to advocate breast-feeding, the article discussed a study by Toronto pediatrician Martin Wolfish. According to Goldbloom, this doctor was interested in how many women initiated breast-feeding, how long they nursed, and factors such as education level and income that correlated with successful nursing. Goldbloom underlined that “there does seem to be a definite trend toward breast-feeding, especially by younger, better-educated mothers (and many more young women are receiving a superior education in this generation than heretofore).” 122 He added that Wolfish had found that women who had sufficient income to hire household help experienced more success nursing their babies.

The only other references to class were found in the 1975 editions of Spock’s and Leach’s books. In his discussion of toilet-training, Spock speculated that mothers without a college education who were “less sophisticated,” having not been exposed to advice manuals, had an easier time with toilet-training because they did not fear upsetting the child. 123 Here, Spock’s assumption about class differences combined with his growing awareness that experts could be responsible, along with mothers, for child-rearing problems. Leach also suggested that toilet-training took “place more quickly in some sub-groups or socio-economic classes than others. Average figures, given by a survey, may therefore reflect a wide range of practices all current at the same time in different groups.” 124

Experts in the 1960s and 1970s, differing from earlier periods, rarely acknowledged varying income levels or described how families could modify the advice to accommodate a more constrained budget. In 1967, The Canadian Mother and Child did suggest that preparing solid foods for the baby at home, such as cooked fruits or sieved cooked vegetables, would be less expensive than buying canned baby foods. 125 Couture’s successors in 1979 affirmed, “By preparing your own foods at home you can control the amount of unnecessary additions and you can usually save

124 Leach, Babyhood, p. 292.
money. Nevertheless, even this advice seemed geared towards mothers who wished to be thrifty, not necessarily those who could simply not afford commercial baby foods.

Interestingly, Spock explicitly acknowledged for the first time in 1976 the continuing existence of poverty in North American society:

It is sad that the richest country in the world, which consumes the lion’s share of the world’s protein, also contains millions of people who are on grossly deficient diets. Some of these millions can’t afford to buy — for themselves or for their children — the right ingredients. Other millions have enough money but, prodded by advertising, enamored of sweets, and disinclined to listen to warnings, they feed themselves and their children large amounts of junk that is undermining health.

Yet in the pages that follow this observation, Spock showed more interest in educating the latter group — the parents who could afford to make better food choices. He did not offer at this time or in his earlier books any advice aimed at parents who could not afford his general feeding recommendations.

References to varying income levels also appeared obliquely in discussions of children’s sleeping space. Though never saying why, some experts acknowledged that not all parents could provide a separate room for the new baby. For example, in 1960, Couture advised that the baby should have a crib in his own room but proposed, “Some people who have no extra room keep the baby in a bedroom during the day, and move him into another room during the night.”

Likewise, while Spock advised in 1962 that a baby should be out of the parents’ room by nine months at the latest, he suggested that, if this was not possible, parents could place a screen between the beds. In later editions, he repeated similar advice when discussing a baby who woke during the night, advising that it was best if the baby could not see the parents upon waking. “It is essential to put his bed in a different room from theirs, at least for a few nights, until the habit is broken, no matter how inconvenient this may be. If this is absolutely impossible, a screen or curtain can be rigged to prevent his seeing them.”

Like Couture, Spock did not explain why a separate room for the baby might not be

126 The Canadian Mother and Child (1979), p. 159.
127 Spock, Baby and Child Care (1976), p. 337
128 The Canadian Mother and Child (1960), p. 70
130 Ibid., p. 188; Spock, Baby and Child Care (1975), p. 196 and Baby and Child Care (1976), p. 228.

This advice was identical in all three versions, except that, in 1976, in keeping with his desire to combat sexism, Spock used the feminine pronoun to describe the baby.
Leach also suggested in 1975 that both baby and mother might sleep better if the baby slept in his own room at night, apart from both mother and siblings. Like Couture, she advised, “Where there is no separate room for him, his cot can sometimes be carried into the living room once the parents are ready to go to bed.” In 1978, she pointed out that infants could sleep anywhere: “A well-padded cardboard box or drawer (taken out of its chest!) would do instead of the usual crib, carry cot or carriage.” These experts admitted that not all babies could have their own rooms, but intriguingly felt no need to explain why this might be so. Was it because of large families, overcrowding, poverty? Their silence on these issues served to reinforce middle-class norms on domestic space.

Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Child-rearing Advice

To what extent did child-rearing advice, particularly that produced by the government, reflect the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of Canada? Mona Gleason argues in her book that psychological discourse on child-rearing in the 1950s continued to presume an Anglo/Celtic Canadian family. Between 1939 and 1987, Canada shifted from a predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant country of just over 11 million to a multicultural society of over 25 million. In addition, the 1960s were marked by campaigns for racial equality, influenced most particularly by the Civil Rights movement against racial segregation in the United States. According to Doug Owram, “Issues of race and racism moved to centre stage and have shaped the outlook of baby-boomers to the present day,... This was the first generation in history to assert a belief that a belief in racial inequality was so unacceptable as to not be a subject for serious intellectual discussion.” In Canada, the social agitation characteristic of the 1960s was further expressed in heightened activism throughout First Nations communities.

In light of the demographic revolution and the growing visibility of racial and ethnic diversity in Canada and across North America, one might expect that advice literature written in the 1960s and 1970s would have expressed an awareness of more diverse families. Instead, as with class

131 Maier, Dr. Spock, p. 408. In his biography of Spock, Maier adds that Spock’s “discussions about whether siblings should share a room implied that the family had the financial means to provide an extra room in the first place.”
132 Leach, Babyhood, pp. 64, 285.
133 Leach, Your Baby and Child, p. 93.
134 Gleason, Normalizing the Ideal, p. 4.
135 Prentice et al., Canadian Women, p. 289.
137 Finkel, Social Policy and Practice in Canada, p. 273.
and in accordance with Gleason’s findings for the 1950s, the experts wrote as if their readers were part of a uniform and homogeneous society. For instance, *The Canadian Mother and Child* of the 1960s and 1970s was printed in both English and French, but it was always a direct translation, with no allowance made for any social variations between the two linguistic groups.

In postwar Canada, food was often seen as a non-threatening way for immigrants to maintain and present their cultures in the host society. Indeed, according to historian Franca Iacovetta, ethnic food became part of a larger “nation-building strategy of promoting national unity through an embrace of cultural diversity.” Publications for immigrants such as *Food Customs of New Canadians*, while critical of some groups, did acknowledge value in the traditional diets of others. Additionally, throughout the 1960s, “ethnic” recipes, though heavily modified, began to appear with greater frequency in publications like *Chatelaine*. More ethnic restaurants and grocery stores appeared, at least in urban centres like Toronto. However, in discussions of diet for babies, experts rarely acknowledged any cultural or ethnic differences. In 1967, Couture’s successors reassured parents, “As baby gets used to a more varied diet you will see that he gets meals more like those of the rest of the family. He can have family vegetables, sieved or mashed, cooked cereals, sieved, crisp bacon and even well cooked fish with all the bones out.” The implication of this advice was that these were common foods consumed by the majority of Canadian families. Spock made a similar assumption in 1962 when he stated, “If you prefer to give the baby the same cooked cereals as the other members of the family, you can start with a white (refined) wheat cereal.”

Into the 1970s, experts were continuing to express beliefs about the uniform nature of diets in Western countries. For instance, both Leach’s 1975 and 1978 books included comparisons of canned and home-cooked infant meals. In this analysis, she examined a beef dinner and a cheese and egg supper, suggesting that she retained fairly traditional ideas about what constituted common British foods. In her 1975 manual, she also added that it made sense from a nutritional standpoint to pair fish and chips, eggs and toast, and roast beef with Yorkshire pudding. Her books contained no sense of any cultural diversity in the diets of children. She made this point explicitly in 1978, explaining, “If few British babies

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140 *Spock, The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*, p. 129.
142 Leach, *Babyhood*, p. 357.
like spaghetti with tomato sauce it is because they are seldom offered it until they are toddlers and have become accustomed to ‘British food.’ An Italian baby will have been given pasta dishes since weaning began. He will probably loathe mashed potatoes because he is not used to them.”

Taken together, these comments illustrate what Leach considered to be “British food.”

On the subject of introducing solids, experts were fairly unanimous about choices. Most advised parents to begin with cereals, whether wheat, oat, rice, or barley. Experts often suggested that babies could try fruit next. Popular choices were applesauce and mashed bananas, as well as peaches, pears, apricots, prunes, and pineapples. When introducing meats, Spock suggested, parents could include beef, liver, lamb, chicken, veal, and pork. The 1979 The Canadian Mother and Child likewise advised beef, lamb, liver, or chicken. While other areas of mainstream culture were beginning to acknowledge or appropriate the food customs of new immigrants, child-rearing experts did not appear eager to do so. Perhaps they felt that parents should not experiment with “ethnic” recipes, like those found increasingly in Chatelaine, until the child was older.

Experts also commonly encouraged parents to offer certain substitutions if their child developed a particular dislike of any food or food group. Though discussing the nutritional components of food in other sections of their books, experts often did not refer to the science of nutrition to justify their advice on substitutions. These omissions provide further evidence that experts believed their advice was commonsensical for the country and culture in question. In 1960, Dr. Chant Robertson reassured parents in a Chatelaine article that milk could be disguised in puddings, cereals, and soups and eggs in pancakes and puddings. Unlike other experts, Spock did refer to nutrition in 1962, though he mentioned no specific studies, when he said that fruits had many of the same vitamins and minerals as vegetables. He also agreed that milk could be incorporated into other foods. Leach affirmed in 1978 that milk was a key component in mashed potatoes, scrambled egg, omelette, pancakes, and white sauce.

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146 Spock, The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care, p. 133
147 The Canadian Mother and Child (1979), p. 158.
but also did not provide any scientific reasons for these specific suggestions.\textsuperscript{150} For the slightly older child bored with certain foods, Spock suggested sandwiches in both his 1975 and 1976 manuals. His list of potential ingredients again implied dietary uniformity. He proposed stewed fruit, dried fruit, peanut butter, egg, canned fish, minced poultry, and meats.\textsuperscript{151} In these suggestions, experts clearly displayed a preference for and comfort with certain substitutions. Most, with the exception of Spock, did not give any scientific rationale for their choices.

Perhaps more intriguingly, Spock seemed also to discourage certain other substitutions or additions to infant diets. In all three books, he commented that most babies did not like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, or turnip. However, in a suggestion that would have deprived such food of most vitamins, he conceded in 1975 and 1976, possibly in recognition of individual and cultural preferences, that “if your family likes some of them (and they can be made much less strong by boiling in two changes of water), there is no harm in straining some and offering it to your baby, too.”\textsuperscript{152} Additionally, citing a lack of vitamins, minerals, and roughage, Spock advised that “the foods to serve less frequently are refined (white) wheat cereals, white bread that is not enriched, macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, crackers … rice, corn meals, corn cereals, hominy.”\textsuperscript{153} In 1976, he strengthened his disapprobation for these foods by saying that they should never be served to children.\textsuperscript{154} In this way, Spock emphatically identified foods associated with particular ethnic groups such as spaghetti or hominy as nutritionally inadequate staples in the diet of any North American families, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds.

The visual images used in child-rearing advice also suggest that most experts in the 1960s were unaware of or indifferent to the increasing racial diversity in Canadian society. In fact, the 1960 version of Couture’s \textit{The Canadian Mother and Child} did not contain any photographs at all. Instead, the book was illustrated with cartoon figures suggesting a Caucasian family. Spock’s 1962 manual contained only a few black-and-white sketches. Couture’s successors used pink and white images in the 1967 edition. This third edition did have a black-and-white photograph of a mother and child on the front cover. However, the figures again appear to be white. Despite the increasing racial diversity

\textsuperscript{150} Leach, \textit{Your Baby and Child}, p. 285.
\textsuperscript{152} Spock, \textit{Baby and Child Care} (1975), p. 136, \textit{Baby and Child Care} (1976), p. 166, and \textit{The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care}, p. 294. In 1962, the wording is slightly different though the message is the same. Spock simply stated one could try some of these less popular vegetables after decreasing the strong taste by changing the cooking water twice.
\textsuperscript{153} Spock, \textit{The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care}, p. 300 and \textit{Baby and Child Care} (1975), p. 304.
of Canada, the authors of the 1979 *The Canadian Mother and Child* also chose to feature an obviously white mother and child on the cover.

By 1975, Spock had added black-and-white drawings to his book. However, he was criticized during this decade by African Americans for his failure to reference people of colour. They argued that “the illustrations, many of them the original Dorothea Fox drawings from the 1940s, usually depicted blond-haired white youngsters with little sign of racial or ethnic diversity.” Partly in response to these criticisms, the back cover of the 1975 manual displayed Dr. Spock reading to a group of racially diverse children.\(^\text{155}\) The front cover continued to feature a photograph of a white baby. As Spock would later respond partially to feminist criticisms, here he acknowledged in part the need to incorporate racial diversity into the advice.

Though her 1975 book contained no images at all, Leach’s 1978 *Your Baby and Child* had black-and-white as well as colour photographs throughout. They featured white mothers and babies predominantly, but also portrayed children of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Of the 50 colour photos, 39 appear to be of white children, with seven, two, and one depicting black, Asian, and Indian children respectively. One is of a racially diverse group of babies. Though writing in the British context, Leach was read, as previously noted, internationally. At least in her use of images, if not her discussion of infant diets, she may have been aware of and responding to the fact that her British, Canadian, and other audiences were becoming more racially diverse.

**Conclusion**

The messages new parents receive can help change or reinforce not only their views on child-rearing but also their outlook on the society in which they live and their understanding of their place within it. Despite the significant social changes, unrest, and contestations of the 1960s and 1970s, child-rearing advice was slow to respond to new realities and feminist critiques. Parents and child-rearing experts have always had to negotiate particular social and historic contexts. In the 1960s and 1970s, much change was occurring in Canada involving the increased visibility of women (including the mothers of young children) in the work force, the growth of second-wave feminism, the consolidation of the welfare state, and increasing racial diversity. These developments were reflected in uneven ways in the advice on feeding, sleeping, and toilet-training. Overall and despite the 1970 *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women*, which affirmed the feminist view that child-rearing was the responsibility of mother, father, and society, experts continued to assume in most areas that the mother would be the primary caregiver.

\(^{155}\) Maier, *Dr. Spock*, p. 408.
Thus, for example, while the father might help soothe an upset or wakeful baby, it seemed tacitly expected that the mother would carry out unpalatable tasks such as toilet-training. Additionally, in spite of concerns from some feminists that breast-feeding could undermine shared parenting, experts increasingly advocated this method through the 1970s.

The family presented in child-rearing advice remained comfortably middle-class. The social programmes created by the Canadian government may have encouraged child-rearing experts, as well as the population at large, to assume that class was no longer significant in Canadian society. Certainly, there is little acknowledgement of varying income levels in the advice. In the 1960s and 1970s, Canada also became much more racially diverse. Immigrants came increasingly from non-European countries. Despite this trend and the campaigns of the 1960s for racial equality, it is clear that, especially in feeding advice, many experts continued to assume a homogeneous and largely Anglo-Saxon audience. Nevertheless, while by the end of the 1970s visual images in child-rearing books did showcase more racial diversity, the messages to parents mostly normalized the experiences and world view of their white, middle-class, and heterosexual messengers.