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Book Review

Nursing Mother, Working Mother Revised Edition

By Gale Pryor and Kathleen Huggins
Harvard Common Press, 2009

Reviewed by Jill Allan

In revising this edition of her classic text, Gale Pryor (daughter of Karen) has been joined by another equally well-known US author in the area of breastfeeding, Kathleen Huggins.

The result is a thorough and reassuring compendium of most things that a new mother who is intending to return to work after the birth of her first baby, or subsequent babies, needs to know. The differences between the US and NZ conditions of employment can be disregarded as the parents' feelings, and the adjustments and preparations they have to make, are the same.

The sections on sleep and working parents are warm and reassuring. Most new research is taken into account, and the usual background information is given about how we went from many millions of years of everyone sleeping together, to the recent developments that in the Western World are called 'civilisation', and their attendant baby-and-mother-separating apparatus of individual bedrooms, cots, etc. The positive aspects of night-time interaction between mothers and babies are stressed, and methods of ensuring everyone gets some sleep are outlined.

I was particularly impressed with the suggestions of how to cooperate and build solidarity with other mothers in the workplace. These could be of real benefit to many women in this situation, especially those in larger workplaces.

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