

dimension that comes from collecting evidence from families over a long period of time. *Aussie Battlers* is more readable than the ACOSS study. The next study should be to conduct a similar survey of middle and high income families. This will enable clearer comparisons to be drawn between the fortunate and the battlers of our society and may help people realise that inequality is deeply embedded in the structures of

Australian society.

Aussie Battlers is an easy book to read. Ideally it would be read by all Australians. Failing that, it should be set reading for all courses preparing professionals who will work with low as well as middle and high income Australians. It should be read by all preparing to work in child care, teaching, nursing, medicine and social work at the very least.

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Discipline – a positive guide for parents by Martin Herbert

Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1989. 141pp.

At first sight this book looked like just more of the many behaviourally-based child management guides for parents. This impression was dispelled by the material in the first three chapters on the values, philosophy, reasons and goals which have to do with why parents might want to use the advice in this book. Indeed, even as the emphasis shifts in later chapters to discussion of behaviour change techniques this is always done in the context of the values and expected personality outcomes related to appropriate use of this knowledge. Herbert's approach softens and humanises a body of knowledge which is sometimes perceived by parents, and indeed, many helping professionals as excessively mechanistic when applied to children's behaviour. In other words, Martin Herbert does what many other authors in this area do not, he deals with the issue of appropriate beliefs about child management. Without addressing this issue, many parents may not be given the intellectual fortitude they need to apply the techniques with the necessary persistence and consistency.

Chapter four, "How behaviour is learned", goes on to explain basic behaviour principles such as reinforcement and extinction in everyday language. This is followed up in chapters five, six and seven with discussion of the appropriate use of penalties and how these should always be used after trying, and in combination with, positive techniques

designed to emphasise development of prosocial behaviour. In short, Herbert promotes a constructional approach to behaviour change.

I thought the principles and techniques were well presented in practical contexts which displayed a thorough going understanding of the demands of family life as well as of the principles presented. One minor negative reaction on my part was to the rather drawn out (I thought) Time Out procedure. His procedure involves responding to non-compliance with a repetition of the instruction and a further warning about Time Out for continued non-compliance before actually applying Time Out. Many children will choose not to cooperate with parental requests till warned of the consequences of not doing so, rather than learn to cooperate more quickly as would occur with a less drawn out procedure. But this may well be a plus for the group of parents I see this book appealing to.

At the end of the section on techniques, Herbert adds valuable material on self control techniques for parents as well as children and sums up the previous material with a few pages on problem solving which gives parents a stepwise framework within which to apply the earlier material.

There is also valuable material on how to understand anger and aggression in a developmental context. Herbert discusses practical methods of dealing with this problem area with emphasis on teaching

children alternate behaviours such as problem solving. Chapter 10 then deals with issues of responsibility and freedom in teenagers and provides a sensible and balanced discussion of the issues. A further chapter on television and its potential influence on children's current and future behaviour gives a balanced exposition of the views for and against viewing violent material. Herbert gives sensible and non-alarmist advice for parents in this area of concern to many responsible parents.

Overall this book does an excellent job of presenting in a palatable format what modern empirically based psychology has to offer in the area of positive approaches to child discipline. Its strength is that it does so in the context of consideration for the values and beliefs which stand behind successful child rearing practice. It will appeal most and be most useful to educated middle class parents with humanistic concerns about their child rearing. It is not a simple how to do it book and therefore would be most useful for helping professionals where there is a need for bibliotherapy material with parents who need supporting material related to appropriate values and beliefs in child management.

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