

# **Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About It**

*Sue Palmer*

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## **Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About It** Sue Palmer

Every concerned parent MUST have this book! Children throughout the developed world are suffering, with obesity, dyslexia, ADHD, and other serious ailments on the rise. And it's not simply that our diagnostic ability has improved—there are very real and growing problems. Top literacy expert Sue Palmer examines the danger zones, from poor diet, lack of exercise, and sleep deprivation to symptoms emerging from our modern lifestyle of TV, computer games, and cell phones. This combination of factors, along with parents' increasingly stressful lives, means that we are developing a toxic new generation, with its health and brains at risk. Here is the latest research from around the world, with advice for worried parents on protecting their families and ensuring their children emerge as healthy, intelligent, and happy adults.

## **Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About It Details**

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# **From Reader Review Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About It for online ebook**

## **Thuraya Batterjee says**

a good book,easily read ,careful analysis and simple tips.

i liked the concept of "Detoxifying" childhood,

especially tips about Detoxing family life:

recognise the supreme importance of time in bringing up children, the younger they are the more " slow time" you need.

learn the art of compromise.

Detoxing Education: primary education is not a race, make sure your child knows what bullying is and isn't. The single most important way parents can help children do well is through talking with them and encouraging them to talk.

Detoxing mealtimes:

make a list of healthy meals your family enjoys, and add to it as you find new ones. Let your children help in planning.

You decide what, when and where your child eats; let the child decide how much, or even whether.

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## **Asimonia Phantasmagoria says**

The writer made her points clear. Sleep, food, games and communication. It could be smaller. I think she tries to judge objectively. I also think that this book should be read by every parent and teacher. It should be a "university" book.

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## **Zahrah Awaleh says**

Brilliant, straightforward analysis of what's gone wrong with our kids and what we can do about it. I saw her speak recently, and she's a great speaker.

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## **Anjuli Mehta says**

I had to read this as part of my pre-reading for my PGCE primary course and it gave me a lot of insight into how the world is effecting children. I did agree with a lot that she said and also took on board a lot of her

suggestions for when I eventually have children.

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## **Victoria says**

I was recommended this by a friend and it certainly gave me food for thought. I couldn't put it down, and I found myself in agreement with a large amount of what Palmer outlines. A lot of it is common sense, such as junk food and TV news, but it was really useful to have the theory presented in a holistic way, and discuss how all aspects of modern society combine to create toxic children. There are certainly some ideas that I will refer back to when bringing up my own children. I also liked how Palmer admitted that she didn't practise what she preaches in all situations, and that she is learning like everyone, as well as highlighting how difficult it can be for women to give up their jobs as it is part of their identity.

The reason for my low star rating is that I felt the 'Mind the Gap' segments were quite snobby and anti-poor/anti middle class/white people. I couldn't believe some of what I read and how society's ills seemed to be blamed squarely on those who are less fortunate or who choose not to be in the two-parent wife-carer husband-breadwinner model, and how it seemed at some points like she was talking about an entirely different species rather than a bunch of people, often neighbours or friends, who are trying their best. Not everyone is the same and I think teaching children to appreciate difference and not look down on or blame those different to oneself is a key lesson along with the other aspects she highlights. It was quite uncomfortable Daily Mail-esque at times. Still, avoid those bits and you'll come away with some valuable things to consider.

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## **Louise says**

Okay, let me start by saying I didn't entirely hate this book.

The author puts forward some good points that I completely agree with, particularly where the educational system is concerned. She talks about how there is too much emphasis on standardised testing; how there are too many children to a class, meaning that teachers can't meet individual children's needs; how physical education has become too "academicised", with teachers focussing more on technique than overall fitness and enjoyment of sports, which in turn leads to children becoming disillusioned with PE and then avoiding it.

She also makes some good points about how outside play is limited for children these days, due to excessive anxiety (from parents and children alike) about the dangers of the outside world, and how children's mental health can be affected by negative stories on the news.

It was also refreshing to see someone who believes that the use of text language won't negatively impact a child's general ability to read and write.

But – and this is a big but – I felt that her good points were lost amongst the barely concealed classism, her lack of respect for people with disabilities and her general ignorance about technology and media aimed at children. Her use of alarmist language was also, quite simply, alarming.

In the introduction alone, Palmer refers to autistic people as "sadly primitive" and goes on to refer to "normal children" who progress towards "civilised self-control." Her attitude towards children with ADHD is greatly

unsympathetic, and she outlines her concerns about children with developmental disorders going on to become criminals. Her issues with Ritalin being over-prescribed are – rather than being that doctors often prescribe drugs to children without considering their background or mental health – the fact that it's expensive and that they may go on to become drug addicts in the future. She cites two rock stars as her evidence of this. Rock stars.

The language Palmer uses to describe the poor is often nothing short of derisive. She implies that “those at the bottom of the social heap” are mainly alcoholics and drug addicts to whom “sociable chitchat with a child is an unthinkable waste of time.” She downright dehumanises impoverished children, labelling them “feral” (although this treatment isn't exclusive to the poor as, in other chapters, we see children described as “barbarians” and “miserable little creatures”) and more or less writes them off, despite the “mind the gap” sections' apparent aim being to help.

I could go on at length about her ignorance of technology and media aimed at children, but I'm trying to remain at least vaguely objective, so I'll just talk about the author's bizarre idea that boys are “naturally drawn to technology” whilst girls “can be attracted to a computer by websites such as Barbie's EverythingGirl site.” (And also the fact that she believes that Cardcaptors is aimed at boys because it appeals to the competitive instinct of the human male, and “little boys' inbuilt desire for ‘power, force, mastery, domination, control...’” Yes, Cardcaptors. The magical girl anime that was initially aimed at young girls, but upon being brought over to the West was edited to appeal to young boys *as well*. But certainly not exclusively. Oh dear.)

The final issue I'd like to touch upon in this lengthy ~~rant~~ review is the author's incredible ability to read minds. In the introduction, and later the final pages of the book, she skilfully deduces that a slightly grumpy-looking child on the steps of the Uffizi Gallery must want nothing more than to “curl up in front of a widescreen TV and lose herself in something mindless” despite her parents being gracious enough to “drag” (her words, not mine) her across Europe to see some of the Western civilisation's greatest treasures. Apparently, her seeming disinterest makes it clear that she is a narcissistic brat. And the speculation as to how she became this way is pretty insulting when you consider that some children just... aren't all that into art.

There are so many more things I could say about this book; however, in conclusion, this book raised some hugely important points, but was bogged down by all that pesky hyperbole and derision for... vast sections of our population. If you're interested in reading a book that presents a slightly less alarmist and biased view of childhood, I'd recommend reading “The Story of Childhood: Growing Up in Modern Britain” by Libby Brooks.

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## Naomi says

I absolutely loved this book. I wish more people would read it. While I already try and do many of the things in this book, it gave me more ideas but also connected everything really well together. Really well written and very thought-provoking.

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### **Figen says**

oyun oldukça ciddi bir iştir enharikulade tarafı da ehlenceli olmasıdır...diyor yazar. Çocuklarımız ne kadar ihmal ediyor ve gerçek problemleri göremeden yakınıp duruyoruz. Hep ucuz zaferler peşindeyiz.

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### **Ali says**

I am a Graphic Design student currently doing a project on the loss of childhood in western society. This book was a great help and one that I have referenced a lot in my research. And one that I will look back on if I ever have children of my own.

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### **Hilary May says**

I don't normally log the (far too many!) parenting books I read, but as I read this from cover to cover. It was a lot more reasonable than I was expecting from the title and comments I'd heard. To be honest I think you could sum these up as 'everything in moderation' 'there are pros and cons of most aspects of modern life' 'don't trust businesses' 'eat as natural food as possible' - did make me feel better for being pretty strict about my children's screen use and what they watch - although they still think I'm the meanest mum in the world!

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### **Lora O'Brien says**

This book makes so much sense. Non-judgmental, practical guidance and advice for raising your kids in as healthy a way as can be achieved in today's toxic society. A must-read for new parents, or those a little further along!

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### **Mushtaq Tahir says**

A very well written book full of valuable points, guidelines and perspectives. There are many poisonous elements in modern society that are disabling our children, mentally, physically, spirituality and morally. This book gives us much food for thought and highlights the challenges faced by both the parent and child.

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### **Aruna Kumar Gadepalli says**

The book that talks about in details various aspects of childhood. From various angles childhood is studied with various suggestions and readings. I strongly suggest to the educators, parents and those who are concerned with children.

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## **Himani Gupta says**

It is a well written book - lots of data and facts, lots of personal opinions and what sounds like plain common sense, yet still not too judgemental. I think the book reiterated a lot of what i knew intuitively about the need to spend time with our children, to think creatively about how we spend time together, to monitor what they eat and how they spend their time etc. I think the dangers of television, internet on minds of children are very real. It is good to be reminded of these things because otherwise parents like me busy juggling jobs and households etc are in danger of letting some of these things slip to the back of the mind.

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## **Mazz Cole says**

Great book. Informative without being patronising. Ok, a lot of this stuff is what we probably already know i.e. our children watch too much tv, eat too much sugar, don't get enough sleep etc. but there is still plenty of food for thought in there. And we all need a nudge in the right direction now and then don't we?

A lot of us read pregnancy or baby books in preparation for a new baby but perhaps barely read up on child care tips or advice for beyond the toddler years, if you'd like to, I'd strongly recommend this book. Lots of good advice and opinion delivered in a friendly, easy to read manner.

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