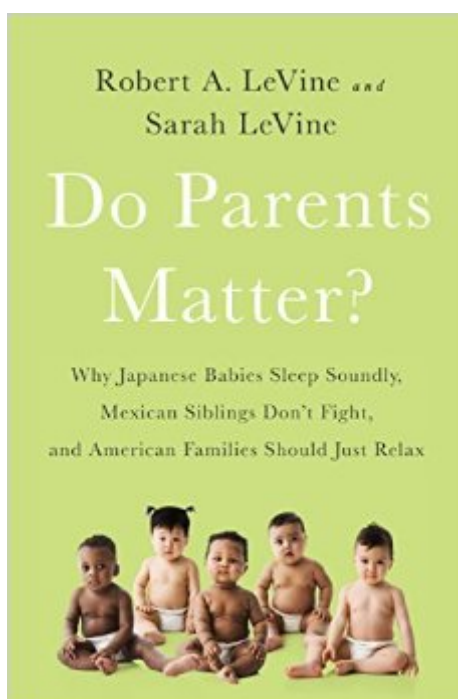


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# Do Parents Matter?: Why Japanese Babies Sleep Soundly, Mexican Siblings Don't Fight, And American Families Should Just Relax



## Synopsis

American parents drive themselves crazy trying to raise perfect children. There is always another news article or scientific finding proclaiming the importance of some factor or other, but it's easy to miss the bigger picture: that parents can only affect their children so much. In their decades-long study of global parenting styles, Harvard anthropologists (and grandparents themselves) Robert A. LeVine and Sarah LeVine reveal how culture may affect children more than parents do. Japanese children co-sleep with their parents well into grade school, while women of the Hausa tribe avoid verbal and eye contact with their infants, and yet, they are as likely as any of us to raise happy, well-adjusted children. The LeVines' fascinating global survey suggests we embrace our limitations as parents, instead of exhausting ourselves by constantly trying to fix them. *Do Parents Matter?* is likely the deepest and broadest survey of its kind, with profound lessons for the way we think about our families.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (2 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

The book title was likely written by marketing managers. Ignore it. The book compares selected birth and child rearing practices taken from a small sample African, Asian and Western cultures. The selection demonstrates that kids are able to thrive under a wide variety of cultural practices. This suggests that the exacting standards popularized for parents in the US may be ill-conceived. Writing style: Engaging rather than overly academic. Range of examples: A modest range. This is not a survey of practices around the world. Is the book repetitive: No. Unlike many parenting books, this one does not suffer from excess filler. Authoritative: The authors are established Anthropologists. This should be understood as an anthropology text rather than a strict pediatric or psychiatric text.

The authors do include some interesting history of the role of pediatricians and psychologists in the history of American child rearing practices.

Book gives examples of how different cultures approach raising children, including examples from Africa, Mexico, Japan and China (most detailed were of Africa). Examples were interesting, but took away a star because I felt most of the discussions on each culture rather brief. Some really fascinating insights interspersed throughout so 4 stars! I agree with first reviewer- book isn't really inflammatory to argue too hard one way or the other about whether parents matter. Overall, I felt like I had an interesting dinner conversation with a pair of anthropologists, who in the end think american parents shouldn't be so hard on themselves- there's more than one way to raise a child.

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