Toddler Troubles
Because your family matters …

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Foreword

Toddlers have a very busy life: there are so many rules to learn, so many skills to acquire, so many people to meet, so many places and things to explore. No wonder toddlerhood is thought of as a ‘sensitive’ stage of development, with a long psychological ‘reach’ into adolescence and even adulthood, especially when things go badly wrong. Small children can be demanding and exhausting. Next minute they’re all sweet and loveable again. Coping with the ups and downs of looking after the under-5s can often leave parents feeling confused and guilty. It can, indeed, be a ‘troublesome’ time as the title of this informative and fascinating book suggests. However, it needn’t earn its sobriquet ‘the terrible twos’ if parents are strategically positive in their outlook and tactically knowledgeable in their child-care – deciding from the outset to enjoy rather than endure their child’s pre-school years. And this is precisely where the author’s guidance to mothers and fathers is so valuable. Jo Douglas, a parent and clinical psychologist, working with families for over 25 years, understands how hard it is when small children refuse
to eat or sleep. In *Toddler Troubles*, she provides effective ideas for handling common problems in family life, like temper tantrums, endless questions, toilet training, eating and sleeping, and coping with endlessly quarrelling brothers and sisters. She writes in a readable, unpatronising and jargon-free style that ‘speaks’ empathically to parents about their concerns and worries in a manner that should instil confidence in even the most anxious or inexperienced parents.

Of course, there are many self-help books in the bookshops on raising children. But to find one that informs parents (on the basis of hard evidence) about what they might actually *do and say* in particular circumstances is extremely rare. The author draws on years of clinical contact with challenging pre-schoolers to provide answers to issues ranging from the effects of having a baby on the mother’s self-esteem and on marital relationships, the consequences of early separations and divorce, to the day-to-day and not-so-common childhood problems that challenge hard-pressed families.

*Toddler Troubles* has applications for all young children. Jo Douglas’s major themes are about the power of ‘positive parenting’ and the effectiveness of creative thinking and behavioural problem-solving in coping with the vicissitudes of raising children. She has succeeded brilliantly by her ‘positive’ writing and a feeling for the dilemmas of parenthood. I heartily recommend her book to you.

*Martin Herbert*

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Jo Douglas has worked with families and children as a Clinical Psychologist for the last 27 years. She worked for 25 years at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London where she established and directed a Day Centre treatment programme for young children with severe and chronic eating problems. She was latterly Head of the Psychology Service there.

She is well known for her work on management of sleep problems in young children which she carried out with Dr Naomi Richman and which produced the first book she co-authored *My Child Won’t Sleep* (1984). Since that time she has written extensively, including books for parents *Coping with Young Children* (1984) and *Is my Child Hyperactive?* (1991), and for professionals *Behaviour Problems in Young Children* (1989) and *Psychology and Nursing Children* (1993). Her primary interest has always been in helping parents of young children manage the wide range of worries and concerns that develop as children grow and change. She has lectured extensively and trained many health visitors,
nurses and doctors in behavioural management techniques for parents with young children through the courses she organised at the Institute of Child Health in London.

She is now an independent psychologist and is enjoying life seeing families and children for assessment and treatment and also writing. She has always tried to keep a balance in her work life with a commitment to home life and her family. Working part-time when the children were young was her way of managing her own needs but also meeting the needs of the family. She was lucky in having a very fulfilling job at Great Ormond Street Hospital, which allowed her to develop her interests. The stimulating environment there of professional colleagues was a fertile ground for exploration of clinical ideas and approaches to treatment.

She has been married for 25 years and has two daughters, aged 17 years and 22 years, plus a dog, five fish, a rabbit and a guinea pig. Her husband has been her main support throughout and has encouraged her as a wife, a mother and a psychologist.
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I would like to thank Dr Jake Mackinnon for spending valuable time reading the manuscript and providing comments, editing and checking on the medical information. It’s great to know that we both think the same way. Also thanks to Vivien Ward for suggesting that I might like to have a go at writing this book.

I would also like to thank the families that I have seen over my clinical career as a clinical psychologist at Great Ormond Street Hospital. We have learned some of this together and I hope that I have been able to provide a small element of direction and optimism in their lives. My colleagues at the hospital, including Richard Lansdown, Bryan Lask, Roy Howarth, Naomi Richman and Philip Graham, were all formative influences and gave me the freedom and confidence to develop my