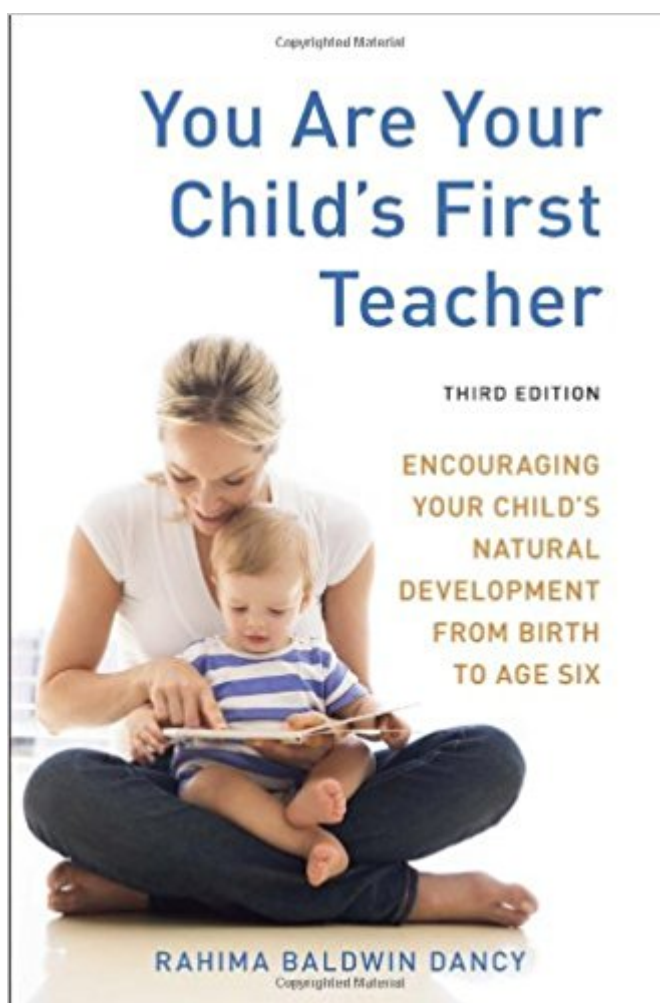


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# You Are Your Child's First Teacher, Third Edition: Encouraging Your Child's Natural Development From Birth To Age Six



## Synopsis

*You Are Your Child's First Teacher* was the first book in America to popularize the insights of Rudolf Steiner, founder of the Waldorf schools, regarding the developmental needs of young children. This revised and updated edition offers new ways for parents and educators to enrich the lives of children from birth to age six. Some of the most important learning years happen before your child reaches school. In *You Are Your Child's First Teacher*, respected Waldorf educator Rahima Baldwin Dancy explains the different stages of learning that children go through from birth to age six, giving you the wisdom and understanding to enrich your child's natural development in the right way at the right time. Today's society often pressures us into overstimulating young children with flashcards, workbooks, videos, and electronic gadgets in a well-meaning attempt to give them a head start. But children are not little adults—they learn and grow in radically different ways at different ages, and what we do to help could actually hurt instead. A trusted classic for over twenty years, this newly revised edition contains updated resources and additional information on discipline, early childhood programs, toilet training, using home life as curriculum, and more. From language and cognitive development to appropriate toys and nourishing your child's artistic abilities, Dancy speaks up for a rational approach to child-rearing, one that helps children be children while we fulfill our important role as parents and first teachers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“This is a terrific book, packed with commonsense advice on the real basics of healthy mental and emotional development. Rahima is a wise and knowledgeable guide for parents struggling to raise good kids in a challenging world. Someday your children will thank you for reading this book!”  
 —Jane M. Healy, Ph.D., author of *Different Learners* and *Your Child’s Growing Mind*  
 “Here is an extraordinary work for those who want to develop a truly intelligent child and, in the process, unlock new levels of their own intelligence and spirit. Rahima Baldwin Dancy gives us a brilliant new insight into early childhood based on the work of Rudolf Steiner and her own rich experience as mother, midwife, and teacher. I only wish it might be required reading for both men and women in all high schools and colleges.”  
 —Joseph Chilton Pearce, author, *Magical Child*  
 “Every time I dip back into *You Are Your Child’s First Teacher*, and there have been many times, I feel like I have been gently elevated and reassured. Rahima gives a compass bearing to the parenting soul.”  
 —Kim John Payne, M.Ed., author of *Simplicity Parenting*  
 “In *You Are your Child’s First Teacher* Baldwin Dancy offers counsel and advice as from a warm and caring friend, never condescending or authoritative, but encouraging, supportive, suggesting new approaches and offering her own experiences for consideration.”  
 —Home Education Magazine  
 “It is Baldwin Dancy’s sensitive, sincere, and ever-so-natural tending to the soul and spirit, as well as mind and body, of the newborn and young child, that makes this a very special book.”  
 —The Wellspring Guide  
 “Parents do not need a new set of rules or another authority telling them how to raise their children, only the capacity to see and understand the young child as a human being. Baldwin Dancy believes she can help parents harness the necessary cognitive and intuitive knowledge to accomplish the task.”  
 —The Brown University Child Behavior and Development Letter  
 “Baldwin Dancy helps us to see that there are real risks to treating our children like little adults. She suggests ways that we can enhance and nurture their development by making conscious choices in our efforts to educate.”  
 —Bookmarks, newsletter of the International Childbirth Education Association

RAHIMA BALDWIN DANCY is internationally known as a Waldorf early childhood educator, author of *Special Delivery*, and coauthor of *Pregnant Feelings*. A mother of four, Dancy is a founding board member of LifeWays North America and co-founded/directed Rainbow Bridge LifeWays Program in Boulder, Colorado. Currently, she is the director of Informed Family Life, through which she organizes national conferences on alternatives in birth, parenting, and education. Visit

I tend toward the "crunchy" end of the spectrum as far as parenting styles are concerned, but something about this book just bugs me. There are lots of things that I appreciate about the Waldorf approach: creating a calm, loving home environment with reassuring rituals and rhythms through the days, weeks, seasons and years; providing an environment that nurtures creativity, with quality, open-ended toys; limiting "screen time" for young children. Basically, let your kids enjoy their childhoods, let them get outside and get dirty, and take it easy with all the lessons, teams, camps, and enrichment whatever. If this is your general philosophy, skip this book and try "Simplicity Parenting" by Kim John Payne or "Calm and Compassionate Children", by Susan Dremond. Both of these are Waldorf-inspired, but written for a more mainstream audience. "You are your child's first teacher" is very strongly based on Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy philosophy. While I think it's possible to appreciate and incorporate many of Steiner's indications, "You are your child's first teacher" is quite dogmatic from my perspective. While others have commented that they find the author's tone to be supportive I find it to be condescending in a lot of instances. While she pays lip service to the fact that guilt is not helpful to anyone, the exhaustive list of very specific "Do's" in this book can't help but be guilt-inducing, especially for a newer parent. If you're not familiar with Waldorf, these "Do's" include things like: music in the pentatonic scale (Major scales, with C & F, are "too bright" for a young child and interfere with the "incarnation" process), surrounding an infant in a particular colour (peach blossom), and providing a young child with beeswax for modelling purposes, because clay is too cold and associated with the earth to be appropriate for a young child. Again I appreciate many aspects of Waldorf education/parenting - I just think that it's possible for kids to do wet-on-wet watercolour painting while also enjoying markers and puffy paint. You can have play silks AND "dress-up" costumes. Of course you want your children to be comfortable but for my giant-headed kid, cotton shirts with a bit of spandex are perfect - despite the fact that synthetics are so "inappropriate" for children, according to this book. I also think that there are some good toys out there that... wait for it... contain plastic. If you're looking for a less dogmatic approach, try "Simplicity Parenting" or "Calm and Compassionate Children". If you're already feeling a bit guilty about something in your parenting life, you could also check out "Buddhism for Mothers" by Sarah Naphthali. The "Creative Family" by Amanda Soule is more of a craft book than a parenting book, but very sweet and worth the read.

Wonderful book that has so many applications for both new mom or those with young children.

Excellent book, please read before having your child. It will help you understand your children from a more spiritual perspective.

My wife and I bought this book to get some ideas and perspective raising our 9 month old girls. It has a lot of good stuff and has influenced our parenting style considerably (less "bucket time", almost no tv/media, emphasis on talking/interacting directly with the girls, etc). While the general approach works for us, I find some of the Steiner background philosophy a little bit out there.

I read this when my children were toddlers and it informed me greatly as a parent. I recommend it to every parent as it is a wellspring of information and guidance. I have given it as a gift to every new mother I know. And I can say, my children are teens and they are very enjoyable people to be with.

It was a good read, normally I don't read a book straight through. I'm usually just looking for the info I need and skimming. The information as well as the suggestions will be strongly considered during this child rearing journey. Check it out, and if you don't like it...there are tons more to choose from. But, I think you'll walk away with something!

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. I found it an easy read that gave a lot of insight into the phases of growth our children go through. The information is presented in a way that is memorable and easy to share with other adults in my child's life. My son is only 8 months old, but I plan to return to this book throughout his childhood for a refresher on ideas and information for each stage of life. I especially appreciated the lists of suggested resources at the end of each chapter. Most importantly, I feel this book validated my actions as a mother who doesn't keep my baby on my hip all day. He has always needed time to play independently. This book helped me to realize that, by letting my baby play independently (with supervision, of course), he will have the opportunities to learn to crawl, walk, manipulate objects, observe adult actions, and imitate life around him. I now am more guilt free about letting him do things like bang on the swiffer box in the kitchen while I unload the dishwasher instead of feeling like every waking moment I need to be interacting with and entertaining him. With this approach, he has become a very curious, independent, and determined little mover who can teach ME how he likes to play and explore the fascinating (every day) world around him.

Love her philosophy or rather Steiner's! Great for first time parents, teachers, students.

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