

Baby and Toddler on Board

*Mindful parenting when a new baby
joins the family*



Val Mullally

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Whilst this book is designed to give helpful tips and insights to parents, the advice and strategies may not be suitable for every situation. This book is not a substitute for advice from a trained coach, counsellor or therapist. If you are concerned that yourself, your child or your family require expert advice or assistance, it is of primary importance for you to seek the services of a competent professional who deals with such concerns.

The characters and incidents in this book are partially fictional, although they attempt to capture the typical scenarios that many parents experience.

For author contact details see <https://www.koemba.com/about/media-kit/>

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About The Author



Val Mullally is a Parenting Expert, a Relationship Coach and Founder of Koemba Parenting, who is passionate about supporting parents to create more enjoyable and fulfilling family life. She and her husband have adult children and are grandparents. Val is an experienced teacher and principal and wishes she'd had the opportunity to read this book before her second child was born, especially at that crucial transition time when a new baby joins the family - because she has seen how these insights can support parents to balance the demands of a baby and a toddler, and create environments for these young children to thrive.

Other books by Val:

BEHAVE: What To Do When Your Child Won't - The Three Pointers To Mindful Discipline

Stop Yelling - Nine Steps to Calmer, Happier Parenting

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In Praise Of “Baby And Toddler On Board - Mindful Parenting When A New Baby Joins The Family”

“What a delightful and novel way to gently lead parents on their child-rearing journey. Val Mullally shares with us her observations of a toddler making sense of a little sister joining the family. Through her relaxed writing style, she invites the reader along on this journey. I felt I was right with her and her grandson as he jumped into puddles, tumbled off his balance bike, and reacted to disappointment.

You will smile as you see little Liam enjoying his family, and you will enjoy the images of the Danish countryside, parks and homes.

Thank you, Val, for this enlightening book.”

Patricia K. Martin PhD Clinical Psychologist

“I have found reading this book very helpful as a grandmother of a three year old toddler with her 8 month brother.

It has been most interesting to read ... an opportunity to share in an experience I can relate to and learn, without realising I am learning skills to apply in my interaction with children. I also regularly look after two little brothers, one of whom is a

downs child/additional needs and the principles in Val's book apply every bit as much with children with special needs. I found the book quick and easy to read and I enjoyed observing the journey the author was on and learning from her experience.

It is an excellent book in understanding children and relating to them meaningfully in our ever-changing society, whether they are your own children, grandchildren or foster children."

Sharon Yarr

"This is an essential and enlightening read for anyone who wants to create a calm and loving home where there is mutual respect and contentment. Val's practical, insightful examples and experiments really encourage mindful and fulfilling parenting. The easy-to-read style and helpful tips make it a book that you will want to pick up for reference again and again. Reading this book will be one of the most beneficial things you can do in preparing for, or coping with, a new addition to the family."

Jennifer McKeague (mum of two lively and lovable boys)

"I absolutely love this book. I am not a native English speaker, but I had no problems to understand. It's well written, easy to read and follow and I couldn't put it down. So many interesting points covered. I read a lot of parenting books already, but this one gave me a new insights and showed me where I could improve to help my little ones become more confident and happy.

I enjoyed the stories and examples and learnt from them how to deal with my own situations.

I already put it into test with my two toddlers (2 and 3 years olds). I still have a few things to do to create better environment for all of us, but parenting is a journey and this book is a great tool to help you get where you want to be. Mindful parent with happy kids and calmer home.”

Pavla Jurasek (mother of two young children)

I love this book! I absolutely love it!

I often say that reading “The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding” is like reading a hug. With this book, it’s like “chatting over a cuppa”. The style is so relaxed and informal. I feel like I’m sitting with a trusted friend, who isn’t trying to tell me how or what to do with my parenting, but rather someone who is genuinely invested in my home being a happy one.

The introduction is gorgeous. It’s so wonderful how the author immediately relates both her desire to connect with her grandson, but also his need for respectful space. I also love how honest Val Mullally is about her own parenting experiences in the past, and how that is what has led her on this path and to this approach to parenting. This makes everything so much more relatable for the parents reading this book.

Val gives gentle, thoughtful and compassionate suggestions on meltdowns and toddlers being stubborn. There are also really useful, practical and easy-to-do tips on toddler tantrums, and other challenges that parents often face at this stage.

As a reader, you can feel the empathy for toddler Liam and how important it is that he’s given the vocabulary to help him deal with his experiences, to make sense of it; and that he is given the space and respect to feel the range of emotion.

The book also discusses, “How safe is safe enough?” This is the question we all ask ourselves with toddlers. We want them to be fearless explorers, to trust their own judgement, to trust their bodies and movements and decisions - but where to draw the line between fearless explorer and child needing safety restrictions. I think this is handled really well by the author, both in this part of the book and also in the Setting Limits chapter. She also discusses the important topic of containing our own anxiety.

Val’s downloadable tips are handy to stick on the fridge or kitchen press. Having them in the book is wonderful but because the majority of our time together is spent in the kitchen, whether eating, playing, drawing etc. That’s where conflict / challenging behaviour would usually arise. Sneaking a quick peek at the fridge door can make the difference between toddler (and parent!) meltdown, and toddler meltdown diffusing quickly with a patient and in-touch parent.

Also it’s lovely that she acknowledges that parenting a baby and a toddler isn’t easy; she makes that ok for the parents too. This book is not overwhelming, it’s not too wordy, it’s not preachy - simple, manageable and bite-size, which is pretty much all a parent with a toddler and new-born can, or wants, to handle.

This book is sweet, simple, succinct, easy-to read, and non-judgemental. Lovely!

Caz Koopman Founder of Gentle Discipline (Ireland)

You can follow new updates and discussion about this book by using the hashtag #BabyAndToddlerOnBoard

For more information visit:

<https://www.koemba.com/baby-and-toddler-on-board-book/>



Foreword

I wish I had Val's book when I was parenting my toddler and baby as there were plenty of times when I got frustrated and didn't understand how best to handle the situation.

In my experience, now that they have grown up a bit (and how quickly they grow!), toddler-time and teenage-hood seem to be the two trickiest times because reason doesn't always work and these are both very emotional times for children as they grow and change so rapidly at these points.

Val's book uses a story-based approach; stories that will resonate and completely make sense, as she explores how parenting is done in Denmark, where her grandchildren live. I found it really interesting learning about how Danish parents approach parenting. It makes you realise how much parents in UK, Ireland and USA, have become helicopter parents, hovering over their kids, afraid to let them take calculated risks, worried about them constantly. Val's book teaches us that children learn through their experiences, and allowing them to have those experiences (in a safe way of course!) definitely makes for emotionally healthier and more resilient kids.

This book also gives parents practical tips to implement around different scenarios. Little steps you can take or changes

you can make to parent your toddler in a more relaxing way for both you and your child.

This is a warm, caring parenting book, one you will hug to yourself as you read!

Jill Holtz, (mum of 2 and co-founder of MyKidsTime.com).



Resources for Readers

Dear Reader,

To accompany this book, I have prepared complementary resources to support you on your parenting journey as you adapt to the challenges of a baby and a toddler on board. It's not always easy to be the parent you want to be, especially when you have to meet the parenting demands of two little people with different needs, different personalities, abilities and different timetables. Here are helpful insights and practical tips, devised to help you take care of yourself and your little ones during this time of adjustment to being a larger family.

Download your [“Carer’s Checklist for Minding a Toddler”](#): a practical resource you can use to prepare for when you may need to call on someone for support at the time of your baby joining your family: [link](#)

You will also be able to access various new resources as we post them on the [Koemba Parenting](#) website. These resources are my gift to you to support you in your parenting journey.

This “Baby and Toddler On Board” book will help if you:

- are concerned that you may become stressed or overwhelmed with the challenges of parenting two, or more, young children
- want to help your toddler feel included and accepting of your second child
- want to know how to best deal with discipline issues with your toddler during this transition in the family
- want to build connection with your baby from the earliest days
- want to ensure that your toddler still feels your love and keeps in close connection with you
- want to know how to help your children to grow towards their full potential
- This book is also helpful for the grandparent, spouse or friend wanting tips and insights on how best to support the mother and the family on the arrival of a second child.

Here’s to your home being one of joy, exploration, discovery and connection for all of you!

#BabyAndToddlerOnBoard

Val Mullally



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Introduction

You've probably picked up this book because you're facing the challenge of how to cope with a toddler on the arrival, or pending arrival, of a baby in the home.

- If you are looking for guidelines and practical tips on how to create a happy home for your children, and for yourselves, here's help.

- If you are in a support role to a young family, this book is also for you.

It has taken me raising two sons, over quarter of a century's teaching experience, and years of further training in childcare, holistic development, relationship theory, life coaching, interpersonal communications, and neurolinguistic programming, plus reading a mountain of books, to reach the stage where I term myself Parenting Expert.

The teachers and guides in one of the most informative parts of my lifelong path of education are my grandchildren. I'm inviting you to share a grandmother's personal journey - the ups and downs of the parenting roller coaster when the family welcome a second child into the home.

Whilst this book happens to be set in the home of a heterosexual couple, the principles of this book can be applied to any type of family raising a toddler, or pre-schooler, and a baby.

There will of course still be unexpected dips and bends in the road of your parenting journey, bumpy patches, and fabulous, unexpected joys. This book offers you a map to guide you through these experiences.

Are you are asking yourself,

“How will I manage the needs of a toddler AND a newborn?”

In this book you’ll discover three key insights to help you create a more harmonious home. You’ll discover how to interact with the toddler, or preschooler, in a way that will support their needs during this time of change in family life, with a chapter at the end of each section relating to baby’s needs too.

Ideally read this book before baby arrives, to equip you in setting the groundwork with yourself and your toddler, and your support team, ahead of time.

Let’s join a grandmother on her journey with her toddler grandson as the birth of his sister approaches, to discover how to create an easier and happier transition when you welcome baby into your home.



The Journey Begins - How to Connect With a Toddler

I kiss my husband. I'm not doing a good job at holding back the tears. It's hard to say goodbye. We will be apart for a month. Our son and daughter-in-law have asked me to stay with them in Denmark. The baby is due any day now. They've asked me to be on "toddler duty". As the plane steers us through the clouds, away from Dublin, I flick through the pages of the in-flight magazine but my thoughts dance around the weeks ahead. How do I be the grandmother I want to be? I'm a fairly young "farmor" (the Danish word for paternal grandmother) but do I have the stamina to keep up with my grandson's energy level? Liam is a twenty-three month old Viking — big, blond and strong, with an adventurous spirit.

How can I support the family so the arrival of a sibling will be a happy memory for my toddler grandson?

How can I assist in creating a foundation for happy relationships as the siblings get older?

My career has focused on working with children and parents - but will my parenting approach be what's needed when I'm immersed in the world of toddler-dom?

Will my theories work for my own family?

The plane taxis into Copenhagen Airport ahead of schedule. Soon my suitcase lurches onto the conveyor belt. It's good to feel the warmth of the afternoon sunshine as I wait in the pick-up zone outside the terminal. My son's little black car eases into sight. The family clamber out the car to greet me. My son, Alwyn, bends to kiss me. Sophia kisses and hugs me, her protruding belly reminding me that their family will soon be four.

"Farmor!" exclaims my grandson. It's great to hear him call me by name.

As we drive home I'm on the back seat next to him. It's been three months since he has last seen me. That's a long time from a toddler's perspective. I know I must connect on his terms — he's strapped into his car-seat which means he can't retreat. I need to take it slow so he can feel comfortable with me again.

"Hi, Liam!" I smile and make eye contact, but I keep well over to my side of the car so I don't encroach his space. He gives a quick smile, then breaks eye contact. I wait. I don't hurry to establish the contact. He stares ahead at the road for a while. I let him set the pace.

He glances at me. I glance back with a slight smile. But I don't try to hold his gaze. I follow his lead.

Then "Lello" he informs me. He has a yellow toy car in his hand.

I look at the toy car he's holding,

"Yellow. A yellow car. You've got a yellow car."

His chubby toddler arm reaches out towards me, so I can see his car. Contact established!

I am thankful for the parenting insight and skills I can use to establish a harmonious connection, where the interaction flows between us. Join me on this journey of a month with a toddler to discover my experience of what helped, and what didn't, in making the arrival of a sibling a smooth transition for the family, and especially for the toddler. You will find three sections in this book that explore the three key insights every parent can use:

1. Follow the Child's Lead
2. Cross the Bridge
3. Hearth Your Home

I wish I had been aware of this approach to parenting when my kids were young. I thought it was my job to make my kids "behave". *I'm the parent. I'm supposed to be in charge, aren't I? My kid needs to learn to behave!* I was an experienced teacher. I thought I knew how to parent. But by the time my second son got to his teens, it was clear my child needed something different and so did I. "Show your child who is boss" - expecting a child to do what they were told - was causing us all heartache.

The crisis in our relationship forced me to take a long and careful look at what it means to be a parent and what children need to thrive. Fast forward the clock to the present day — I now have more than twenty years of research into what creates healthy family relationships I'm thankful for the privilege of my adult children and their families in my life. Now I have the amazing experience of revisiting the world of parenting a toddler, with my grandson. Here's what I discovered.