

Ticklish

*New ways to help your child
Learn, Love & Play*



DR JENNIFER BARHAM-FLOREANI

BACH. APP. CLINICAL SCI. / BACH. CHIRO.

Praise for Dr Jennifer

“Becoming a parent is the most exciting, fulfilling, yet challenging role I’ve ever played. Naturally, like all parents, I want to provide my daughter with the best possible environment for her development and allow her to shine in all aspects of her life. Having worked with Dr Jennifer Barham-Floreani for years, I’ve experienced first-hand how her knowledge and passion for vitality can change lives. My daughter was born premature and immediately Dr Jennifer gave my husband and I invaluable advice to assist our little girl and empower us as new parents... “Ticklish” is a must-read for all parents—wonderfully practical, chock full of the latest research on child development and written by one of Australia’s best health authorities. So get tickling!”

Gorgi Coghlan (TV host, “The Circle”, Channel Ten)

“Thank you ever so much for your dedication in sharing your wisdom with the world.”

Dr James Sigafosse (chiropractor)

“We have been impressed by Dr Jennifer’s balanced perspective... Well-informed parents make well-informed decisions for their children’s health... and that means a better future for all of us!”

Dr Don MacDonald (author, chiropractor & speaker, Alberta, Canada)

“You can feel the fairness, love, consideration and wisdom from Dr Jennifer.”

Dr Elizabeth Taylor (President, World Congress of Women Chiropractors)

“By shining a fresh light on health and encouraging an attitude of preventative healthcare and lifestyle choices, Jennifer inspires us all to do the best we can for ourselves and our loved ones.”

Heidi Cummins (naturopath N.D. BaHSc. A.N.T.A.)

Ticklish—

New Ways to Help Your Child Learn, Love & Play

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tick·lish [tik-lish]
adjective

1. **sensitive to tickling:** *children!*
2. **requiring careful or tactful handling and action:** *parenting*
3. **extremely sensitive:** *times have changed, it's a new ball-game and our children's developmental needs are different now.*



Tickling involves simultaneous sensations of pleasure and pain which can be real or imagined. Similarly parenting is a delightful yet tricky arena—particularly with the changes that our ‘new millennium’ children now face.

Ticklish discusses many new, simple, proven, research-based ideas for you to help your child learn, love and play, so that they thrive in today’s challenging environment and express their full potential.

The ‘tickle response’ is mostly pure joy and vivacity...

...this is our goal as loving parents.

DISCLAIMER

Please read carefully...

This book addresses a number of health issues and countless published papers, articles and books have been sourced. Within the limitations of human nature, *Well Adjusted*™ has compiled these as accurately as possible.

The contents of this book, all text, graphics, images, studies and information are for informational purposes only. The content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Please do not disregard professional medical advice or delay seeking it because of something you have read in this book.

This information is not meant to prevent, alleviate, or cure any disease or disorder. Always seek the advice of a holistic-orientated physician, doctor of chiropractic or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

The purpose of this book is to compliment, amplify, and supplement other text. You are urged to read all the available material, learn as much as possible about health and wellbeing, and tailor the information to your individual needs. Every parent, child and family are unique with their own individual health needs.

Neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable or responsible for any loss or damage allegedly arising from any information or suggestion on this book or in any of the *Well Adjusted*™ products. Furthermore, if you suspect that you have a medical problem, we urge you to seek professional medical help.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to chiropractors who love their clients' children like their own and want nothing but the best for them.

A very special thank you to Drs Liz Anderson-Peacock, Neil Davies, Joan Fallon, Maxine McCullen, Simon Floreani, Peter Fysh, Carol Phillips, Wayne and Angela Todd, Genevieve and Rosemary Keating, Sharon Vallone, Jeanne Ohm, Glenn Maginness, Bobby Doscher, Claudia Anrig and Gregory Plaugher from whom over the years I have learnt so much on how to care for babies and children. Thank you for the clinical papers and the text books you write, and the seminars you facilitate, thank you for guiding me personally.

Thanks

My deepest thanks to my team—to Dr Kate Marshall for being my maverick research assistant, Louisa Dent for being such a committed, wonderful editor and Matt Cumming for bringing all of this content together so beautifully. Thank you for sharing the vision.

And finally to the fine gentlemen in my life—big and small—thank you for believing in me.



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Foreword

As the mother of two boys, I know how divine and difficult the role of parent can be. I was lucky enough to have two beautiful homebirths, and in preparation, I read every book available about the birth process and felt very comfortable about facing whatever eventuated.

It was what came afterwards that was a shock. Sleepless nights, concerns that I wasn't capable, endless questioning about whether I was doing it right, guilt over the obvious evidence that often I wasn't, interspersed with overwhelming feelings of love and joy. It's an incredible rollercoaster that sometimes feels like it's never going to end. But it does, and getting the most out of your child's early years is paramount. Because before you know it, they're out of your lives and you're wishing you'd done more and shared more and taken more time to be with them.

Which is why Dr Jennifer Barham-Floreani's work is so welcome and important. Long acknowledged as a wonderful practitioner, in this book she succinctly and gently sets out how we can optimize our children's health and wellbeing outcomes.

Her experience is undeniable, her research impeccable, her advice easy to follow, but most of all, her empathy and compassion for parents and children makes *Ticklish* an essential resource for any parent.

What she writes about makes absolute common sense but often we are so bombarded by everyday pressures that common sense is the last thing that is in the forefront of the busy twenty-first century parent's mind.

As Jennifer says, things are different now, and the new paradigm means that we need to be constantly vigilant and thoughtful about how we raise our little ones. The first few weeks, months and years are the best opportunity we have to give our children a strong and effective physical, mental and emotional foundation, and the plethora of products and distractions don't help.

The recurring theme in Jennifer's book is joy, something which is easy to forget when we're surrounded by 24/7 bad news coverage. Children need to see, feel and experience joy in their own lives and in the lives of the people around them.

And of course, peace. We and our children don't get enough of it. But by following Jennifer's advice and being mindful of what we are responsible for and capable of, we can feel a sense of peace about our parenting abilities and the welfare of our dear children. And isn't that what we all want?

Enjoy your children and laugh, love and tickle them as much as you can, while you can.

Noni Hazlehurst A.M.



Noni Hazlehurst is a multi award-winning Australian actor in film, television and stage. She is widely known for her 24 years as the presenter of Play School, Australia's longest running children's show, and as the host of Better Homes and Gardens. She is a long time advocate for the wellbeing of children and has been the National Ambassador for Barnardos Australia, a leading child welfare charity, for the past nine years. She is committed to helping protect the lives of children who suffer from the trauma of neglect and abuse or the humiliation of poverty and homelessness, and she has been appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for her services to children. Noni frequently contributes to parenting magazines and is a passionate supporter of quality chiropractic care.



Who is Dr Jennifer Barham-Floreani?

Dr Jennifer Barham-Floreani is a mother of four, chiropractor—awarded Woman Chiropractor of the Year (WCWC, 2011) and Australian Chiropractor of the Year (2008)—and best-selling family health author.

Jennifer's work is respectful yet thought-provoking and encourages parents to define their own health culture. The material she presents is both informative and entertaining, written with heartfelt honesty and raw emotion that nourish the soul.

She is passionate about holistic parenting which she believes requires the constant sourcing of knowledge on how to nurture her children's health and wellbeing, strengthening their life force physically, emotionally and spiritually. Jennifer does not believe this style of parenting happens by default but rather that it requires both commitment and stamina.

Together as parents this enables us to raise a generation of conscientious and empowered young individuals.



To see Dr Jennifer's best-selling book **Well Adjusted Babies**, as well as other products and free research articles, please visit www.WellAdjusted.me

Introduction

*“The man who graduates today
and stops learning tomorrow is
uneducated the day after.”*

—Newton D Baker

Today’s parents are special. We have to be—we are raising children in a very different world. As the quote suggests, parenting today requires constant learning. And as my mother likes to remind me, “Things aren’t the way they used to be.”

She’s right. Look around; they aren’t.

Food isn’t what it used to be. It’s injected and sprayed (funnily, so are many of our celebrity idols!), our water is laden with chemicals, as are deodorants and sprays, clothing and furniture. Most of us feel overwhelmed with trying to keep abreast of modern lifestyle health threats. As proactive parents we need to be constantly sourcing the latest information and tools which may offer greater quality of life.

Prior to having children, many of us are so busy we forget to go to the bathroom, let alone contemplate what’s important in life. Then along come our beautiful children and all of a sudden we want to invest in our own long-term health and fiercely protect our child’s.

With parenting not only is there a huge learning curve about how to physically nurture our children but we then also want the best for them emotionally, desiring for them to grow into self-assured and socially connected individuals.

Most of us, however, are clueless as to how we can assist our child’s brain development. We are unsure of what we should feed our children not to mention what on earth we need to do to strengthen their health.

If you too have ever wondered when you look at your child, “Where’s the instruction manual?”, know that you are not alone! Most of the parents I work with from across the globe have these very same questions and they have a similar goal to you in that they want to raise healthy, vibrant children.

Admittedly, I too have spent many anxious moments contemplating the enormity of parenting. The good news is there is so much that we can do to protect our children’s health and nurture their minds and bodies. Babies learn to grow through movement and play, through their environment and experience, while children learn



through being engaged in activities and repetition.

Overall the future wellbeing, growth and development of our children depends upon how well their bodies are functioning. The body operates as a whole organism and each system of the body is delicately interconnected. We discuss many topics in this book in order to arm you with a road map—not quite an instruction manual but rather a collection of ideas and knowledge on how to take your child to greater levels of health and wellbeing.

Ticklish discusses many new, simple, proven, research-based ideas for you to help your child learn, love and play, so that they thrive in today's challenging environment and express their full potential.

Some parents may have concerns that their child is not integrating their world well and again let me say, you are not alone. It is now estimated that at least 5-10% of children world-wide have ADHD and the number of children with developmental delay and autism is escalating.¹ According to a US research report by the *Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility, In Harms Way: Toxic Threats to Child Development*, it is estimated that in the United States nearly 12 million children (17%) under the age of 18 experience one or more learning, developmental or behavioural disorders.² We have an epidemic before us and children within this spectrum, like any children, need us to believe in their potential.

I am not suggesting this book is a cure-all for any child or any particular health complaint but I will point out that some of the greatest minds today had childhood health challenges and some of my greatest heroes are individuals who have defied constraints or labels that society had once placed on them and they have made a remarkable impact on our world.

Why? Because someone believed in them. Someone guided them, helped them gather tools and resources, and reminded them about the importance of self-esteem.

One life story that I often reflect on is that of Dr John Demartini.

When John was seven years old, his teacher sat with his parents and told them that John had serious learning disabilities and that he would never learn to read or write. The teacher went on to say that he would never amount to anything.

After failing year after year at school, at age fourteen John convinced his parents he could fend for himself. He hitchhiked around America, living off the streets, scavenging enough food and money to fill his days surfing. Then at age seventeen John almost died from a self-induced coma and at this time it dawned on him that he wanted to do much more with his life. A man then came to his aid who would become one of his greatest mentors.

John spent every day mastering reading and studying every field imaginable, including science, mathematics, astronomy and philosophy. He then went to college and found himself surrounded by peers who were asking for his coaching and assistance. He recounts one day that he heard one fellow student whisper, "That John, he's a freaking genius!" Hearing this, he began to weep.

Dr John Demartini has changed my life in so many profound ways and the lives of millions of other people. He is now considered one of the world's leading authorities on human behaviour and personal development. He travels 360 days a year to countries all over the globe, sharing his research and findings in all markets and sectors. He is the author of 40 books published in 28 different languages. He has produced over 50 CDs and DVDs covering subjects such as development in relationships, wealth, education and business.

His 38 years of cross-disciplinary research and study have led to much of his work being incorporated into human development industries across the world.

Throughout time there have been many people like John, known to have learning disabilities equivalent to today's ADHD, who have shaped our lives in many ways. These people include Einstein, Edison, Leonardo da Vinci, Galileo, Columbus, Beethoven, Picasso, JD Rockefeller, Eleanor Roosevelt, Elvis, John Lennon, Sir Richard Branson, Jamie Oliver, Will Smith, Presidents George Bush Senior and Junior, Michael Phelps and Bill Gates, to name a few.

I share this story and these names with you because each and every one of us—and each and every child—with or without a health label has a unique potential within them.

Your role as a parent is to love them and guide them so they have every opportunity to learn and grow.

My role as a fellow parent and health practitioner is to provide you with the latest and most holistic approaches to strengthening your child's physical, emotional and mental wellbeing.

And what an honour that is.

In fact I'm tickled pink

NOTE TO READER

For ease of reading in this book I make the distinction between mothers and babies by referring to babies using the masculine pronouns “he”, “him” and “his”.

*“Nature never repeats herself and
the possibilities of one human soul
will never be found in another.”*

—Elizabeth Cady Stanton



Ways to Help Your Child's Brain Develop

In sharing a number of ideas on how to create a stimulating environment for your child, my intention is not for parents to become anxious regarding their child's progress or to 'push' their child along, it is rather to provide knowledge for parents who genuinely want to learn about their infant's world, to engage with their child and hopefully create a deeper, more interactive relationship.



1

Many of us lead busy, goal-oriented lives in which we race about, eager to achieve quick results and succeed in all manner of tasks, great or small. This cultural tendency permeates everything we do—even our nurturing. As parents, we may be eager for our children to achieve, and even when they are babies, we are encouraged to watch them closely, ticking the boxes of optimal development as they grow.

Panic may set in at the first sign of inadequacy, but although fears relating to autism and learning disabilities are sometimes well warranted, in most cases a child that learns to walk first is not necessarily Einstein-in-the-making, nor is the child who crawls last destined to be Homer Simpson. All children are different, they progress at individual rates, and neurological development naturally ebbs and flows.

While it is certainly useful for parents to have an understanding of developmental milestones, it is better again for them to:

- Learn how to enrich their child's environment;
- Appreciate which lifestyle factors may dampen their child's capacity to grow.