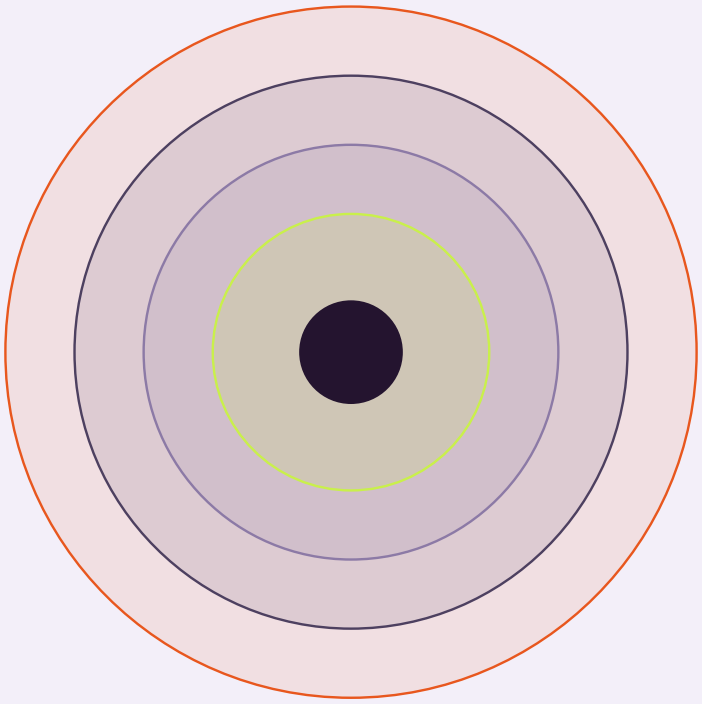


# The Simplest Baby Book in the World: The Illus-trated, Grab-and-Do Guide for a

# Healthy, Happy Baby

A reading of the book by Stephen Gross, Jeremy F. Shapiro, Gabriella Terhes Karlsson (2021)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of The Simplest Baby Book in the World: The Illustrated, Grab-and-Do Guide for a Healthy, Happy Baby, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

# The book in a minute

Stephen Gross is a brand creative executive who has worked for Disney and Mattel, and he wrote this guide as a new dad, with the pediatrician Jeremy F. Shapiro and the newborn care specialist Gabriella Terhes Karlsson. The book boils a baby's first year down to the essentials and sets them out as short, illustrated, step-by-step pages that a tired parent can take in at a glance. Its fourteen chapters run from preparing for the baby through feeding, sleep, diapers, bathing, play, safety and health, and end with finding support and staying sane. At its centre is the Simplest Baby Plan, a daily schedule for eating and sleeping, and the sleep chapter lays out several sleep training methods before the author's own approach. Quick Tips and Daddy Hacks add small workarounds for everyday problems.

Below are the 9 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

# The takeaways

1

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

### A new parent needs the essentials they will use at 2 a.m., not every contingency.

Most baby books try to cover everything that could happen. This one does the opposite and keeps only the first-year basics that come up again and again. Less to read means more of it gets used.

2

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

### When your hands are full, a picture beats a paragraph.

The book leans on illustrations and step-by-step layouts, because a parent holding a baby can glance at a drawing but cannot read a dense page. Gross came to baby books from a career in visual brand work, and it shows in how each topic is laid out.

3

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

### A simple daily plan takes a lot of the guesswork out of eating and sleeping.

The Simplest Baby Plan gets its own chapter, right after preparing for the baby and before feeding and sleep. The point is a predictable shape to the day, so you are not deciding everything from scratch every hour. Your pediatrician still sets what is right for your baby.

4

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

### There is more than one way to help a baby sleep, so know the options before you pick one.

The sleep chapter summarizes several sleep training methods instead of selling just one, then sets out the author's own scheduling approach. Seeing the options side by side helps parents choose what fits their family, and talk it through with their pediatrician.

5

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

### What ends up in the diaper is information, not just mess.

Understanding poop has a chapter of its own. In the early weeks, how many wet and dirty diapers a baby has is one of the things a pediatrician asks about. A parent who notices and writes it down has better answers at the checkup.

6

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

## Small hacks take the friction out of a hundred daily jobs.

Alongside its Quick Tips, the book carries Daddy Hacks: a dad's shortcuts and workarounds for everyday baby problems. None of them is life-changing alone. Together they make the day run more smoothly.

7

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

## Use a book for the basics and your pediatrician for your baby.

Gross had the material checked by a pediatrician, a newborn care specialist, a lactation expert and a sleep trainer. Even so, a book cannot see your child. When something worries you, the call goes to the people who can.

8

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

## The grown-ups need looking after too.

The last two chapters, Support and Staying sane, are about the parents rather than the baby. A rested, supported parent makes better calls. Asking for help is part of the job, not a sign you are failing at it.

9

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

## Feeling frustrated by a crying baby is normal, and saying so out loud helps.

In interviews about the book, Gross has said he wishes people were more honest about the hard parts: lost sleep, a messy house, less freedom and strong feelings. Knowing others feel it too makes it easier to ask for a break before you need one.

PUT IT TO WORK

# Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Put the numbers where everyone can find them
- [ ] Ask the hard questions at the first checkup
- [ ] Build one grab-and-go changing station
- [ ] Sketch a simple daily rhythm
- [ ] Name three people you can call

KEEP UP DAILY

- ◯ Log feeds, sleeps and diapers
- ◯ Hand over at every shift change
- ◯ Read one stage ahead

30 days · Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

# Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

# The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

# The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

- [ ] SETUP 1

## Put the numbers where everyone can find them

Save your pediatrician's office, the after-hours line and your local emergency number in every caregiver's phone.

Write them on a card for the fridge too.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 2

## Ask the hard questions at the first checkup

Ask your pediatrician how they want your baby to sleep, what temperature or symptoms should make you call, and when to go straight to the emergency room.

Write the answers on the same card.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 3

## Build one grab-and-go changing station

Put diapers, wipes, cream and a change of clothes in one basket you can carry.

If you have stairs, make a second one so you are never hunting at 2 a.m.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 4

## Sketch a simple daily rhythm

On one page, write a rough shape for the day: feeds, naps, bedtime and who covers the night.

Treat it as a draft, and check feeding amounts and timing with your pediatrician.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 5

## Name three people you can call

Write down three people who could hold the baby for an hour so you can sleep or shower, and ask each of them this week.

Add a parent support line for your area to the list.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

# Log feeds, sleeps and diapers

For the first weeks, jot down each feed, sleep and diaper with the time.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

## November 2026

| MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 ○ | 7 ○ | 8 ○ |
| 9 ○ | 10 ○ | 11 ○ | 12 ○ | 13 ○ | 14 ○ | 15 ○ |
| 16 ○ | 17 ○ | 18 ○ | 19 ○ | 20 ○ | 21 ○ | 22 ○ |
| 23 ○ | 24 ○ | 25 ○ | 26 ○ | 27 ○ | 28 ○ | 29 ○ |
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## December 2026

| MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
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| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

# Hand over at every shift change

When one parent takes over from another, spend one minute on the last feed, the last diaper, the last sleep and anything odd.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

## November 2026

| MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
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| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

# Read one stage ahead

Before a new stage starts, such as solids or the first trip out, read that section and write down what to ask your pediatrician at the next visit.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

## November 2026

| MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
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| 30 ○ | | | | | | |

## December 2026

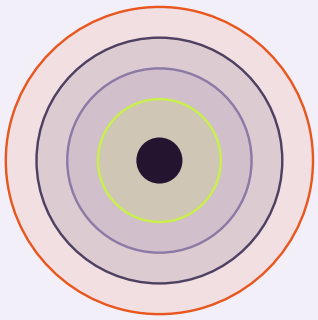
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



# You don't need to know everything about babies. You need the next simple step, and someone to call.

HOURLIFE NOTE AFTER STEPHEN GROSS

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Read it online, and vote on the takeaways: hourlife.com/books/the-simplest-baby-book-in-the-world
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