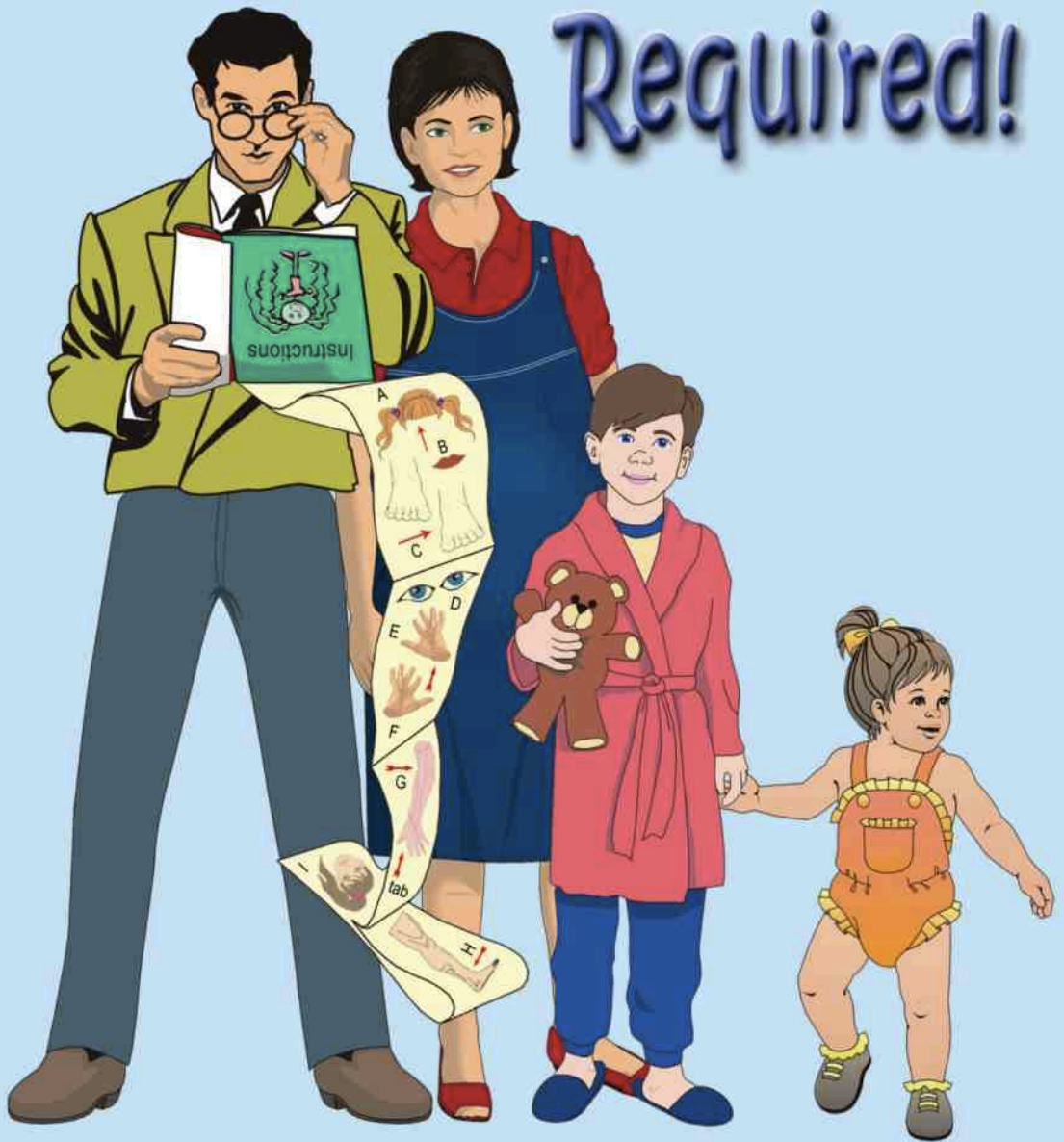
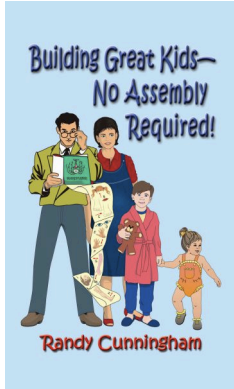


Building Great Kids— No Assembly Required!



Randy Cunningham



Building Great Kids-No Assembly Required! provides today's parents with common-sense, easy-to-learn, and immediately-usuable tips to develop great communication with their children. Building Great Kids makes a real difference in relationships...in a matter of moments!

Building Great Kids- No Assembly Required!

by

Randy Cunningham

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www.randycunningham.com

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Randy Cunningham is a Texan who loves to eat ribs, watch baseball, and play drums. When not working as a school counselor, he writes and travels across the country talking with church groups, university-level teacher preparatory classes, public school administrator and teacher trainings, marriage & family retreats, and parenting groups regarding his unique approaches towards developing better communication with kids of all ages.

A husband and father, Randy loves to collect music CDs, and is always searching for the next great place to eat barbecue.

You can visit Randy online and drop him a note at www.randycunningham.com

Randy Cunningham

Building Great Kids—No Assembly Required!

USING YOUR “STREET SMARTS”

Living life with your kids requires “street smarts”, that is, using your instincts, talents, gifts, and innate abilities to raise your child in the best way you can. Knowing just what to say and how to act at a moment’s notice to care for your loved one becomes second nature, without having to stop and read about it first.

“*Building Great Kids—No Assembly Required!*” is all about “street smarts”. Yours.

OK, I’LL ADMIT IT. THIS BOOK’S A BIT DIFFERENT

Maybe you’ve already thumbed through parts of this book, and you’re thinking:

“What, no chapters?”

“Why are some of the sections so short, while others are 2 pages long?”

“What’s the deal with all the italics?”

“Why does sour cream have an expiration date?”

OK, so maybe you know the answer to the sour cream question. I’m clueless. Any food that tastes like it expired weeks ago shouldn’t need a date to say, *“I’ve gone bad. Throw me away, please.”*

Sorry for the rant. Back to the book. Let’s take your questions one at a time.

QUESTION #1—“WHY NO CHAPTERS?”

Remember when I mentioned that the book was written with a busy world in mind? Think about it: our world is built on “sound bites”. You’ve watched the nightly news. How long are the stories? Exactly. Very short. Itsy-bitsy. Teeny-tiny.

Simply stated, they’re not long at all.

Randy Cunningham

“WOULD YOU ANSWER THE QUESTION?”

Again, the news is built around “sound bites”. Lots of information in a small amount of time. Here are a few examples:

The murder at the mall? 1 minute.

A bombing overseas? 45 seconds.

The weather forecast for today, tomorrow, and the week to come? Three minutes, tops.

And what about commercials during the news? Product sponsors can pack more information into a 15-second spot than you or I ever dreamed possible. Last week, during a 2-minute span of time, I learned about a new heartworm vaccine, a medicine to reduce prostate difficulties, and a tasty potato chip with cheese, garlic, and ridges. Life was good!

This book was written with “sound bites” in mind. I’ve provided you with a lot of information in many small “packages”, and it’s my hope that anytime you spend a few moments reading it, you will learn several ideas or “bites” that you can use immediately with your child.

QUESTION #2—“SOME SECTIONS ARE SHORT, AND OTHERS ARE LONG. WHY?”

Ever asked someone a question, only to receive an hour-long response when a minute would’ve been sufficient? (And a lot less confusing!)

So have I.

Some sections in “*Building Great Kids*” are short and to the point. I could ramble, but sometimes there’s nothing else to say.

Others are longer, because they require additional information. Hopefully I do this in a language you find entertaining and informative.

Remember: “sound bites”.

**QUESTION #3—“WHAT’S THE DEAL WITH
ALL THE ITALICS?”**

Throughout the book, many of the italicized words are conversations between fictional characters, including family members or friends. Also, during the course of the book, you will read several letters, written from a child to his or her parents. These letters are an attempt to provide the perspective of children at various age levels, such as a preschooler, an elementary-age child, a young teen, and finally, from a college student. Also, on many occasions you will read “conversations” between myself and the reader.

“The reader. That’s me. How can you have a conversation with me?”

While writing this book, I sincerely tried to put myself in your place. I did my best to try and think how you might respond to my ideas and suggestions.

“Why?”

It’s simple. I want these ideas to work. I don’t want to give you “pie in the sky” suggestions that sound good, but have no value. To make sure these ideas are really meaningful, I wrote “you” into the book by:

- Defending my positions if “you” question my ideas.
- Explaining my suggestions when “you” aren’t so sure they actually work.
- Answering the questions that “you” pose regarding a technique or suggestion.

“So, you’re trying to put yourself in my shoes?”

Exactly. I’ve tried my hardest to write this book not just from my perspective, but also from yours. In a sense, every person who reads this book is also the author. I’m just sorry there’s not enough room on the cover for all our names!

“So, what about book royalties for me?”

Umm, nope.

“Maybe a small picture on the back?”

Sorry.

Randy Cunningham

YOU CAN'T GO WRONG
WITH THESE RIGHTS!

OK, dads, the next few pages are for you. (Mom, of course you can read them!)

You bought every diaper within a 100-mile radius of home.

You took ironing courses at the local junior college, and in the baby's closet were, at one time, 47 ironed outfits, lined up and ready for wear.

You built an additional room on your home, specifically for the purpose of stockpiling baby supplies. Even those folks who were Y2K hoarders called you to ask for advice on long-term survival.

All this was accomplished in one week. Why? Because at one point in your life you heard your wife mention those 2 magic words that immediately changed your life:

"I'm pregnant."

Yep, everyone offered their congratulations. It was a time of total elation. Forget about sitting on Cloud 9. At that point you were hanging out in the penthouse!

Now that the child is here, it's back to the real world. Sure, you may already be employed, but you've got another job. A job with huge responsibilities that lasts for years.

Your bundle of joy is here, but right now there's another special person who also needs your attention and devotion.

Mom.

This time in your life will provide more twists and turns than a knotted-up jump rope, and Mom needs help to smooth the road. The following "Mom's Bill of Rights" will point you in the right direction.

MOM'S BILL OF RIGHTS

Dads, brand-new moms deserve extra love, attention, and the best care possible, and it's important for you to provide her with all the physical and emotional assistance she so richly deserves. Guys, there's not a single male alive who can even begin to understand what Mom is going through. However, we can make motherhood a lot less stressful for her by making just a few tiny adjustments to our "guyness".

Hold on. I know what you're thinking. Something along the lines of:

-*"Randy's gonna tell me I have to watch the Romance Channel!"*

-*"But I can't iron clothes!"*

-*"What do you mean, give up my TV remote. That's my Constitutional right!"*

Don't be concerned. I said, "tiny adjustments". Really! Listen, I understand about the Romance Channel!

So, rather than rambling on with page after page of hundreds of tips and ideas, I thought it might help to narrow our focus, and to have a bit of fun. So, let's play a game called, "Yes, You Too Can Be An Ultimate Deluxe Cool Guy Dad-Type Person". Right now you might be thinking, *"Great. This game is going to show me how little I'm doing as a father to help my wife. Thank you, Randy."*

Absolutely not. The point of this game is to show you a few quick ways to become an "Ultimate Dad", with just a few changes in your own lifestyle. Put another way, this game is designed to focus on what you can become, not what you are.

Here's how the game works: I'm going to list 10 "helping" items that you can accomplish for Mom. At the end of the list you will find a scorecard. The more items you accomplish, the better your score on the "Ultimate Deluxe" scale.

Ready?

"I guess. You promise that I won't watch the Romance Channel?"

Yep. Let's go!

Randy Cunningham

RIGHT #1—“WHAT’S UP, DOC?”

Attend every doctor’s visit possible. Yes, you might miss your weekly foursome at the club, or your favorite cartoons, but your child’s visits to the doctor are all-important to Mom, and she really wants you to be there with her. It’s imperative for you to learn as much as possible about the growth and physical well-being of your child, and taking part in doctor visits is a great help for Mom. The physical help, such as holding the baby, or carrying the diaper bag or stroller will be a great relief for her. Also, the emotional support you provide by asking questions and taking an interest in the welfare of the child will be greatly appreciated. A word of caution: leave your golf clubs in the car. Do not bring your putter into the doctor’s waiting room. Trust me, that thing can be used as a weapon.

RIGHT #2—“MAY I TAKE YOUR ORDER?”

Watching what you eat. Yes, what you eat. See, many moms will be trying to eat healthy during the time after childbirth, and if she’s trying her best to eat as many good foods as possible, it’s not nice, fair, or cool for you to walk in with a “balanced diet”, that is, with both hands carrying equal amounts of cream-filled treats. (These items include, but are not limited to, doughnuts or any cereal that ends in “Os”, such as Blam-Os, Blast-Os, or Power Os. More often than not, these cereals have enough sugar in them to light up Detroit.) Remember, she’s trying to eat in a healthy manner, so support her efforts by only eating good-for-you meals and snacks when in her presence. If even the thought of giving up your favorite fast food sends you into a 12-step program, don’t be concerned. It is possible to eat in your car, behind the garage, or in a neighbor kid’s treehouse. Remember, if it’s not good for Mom, the least you can do is eat it out of her sight range. Make sure to wipe off any stray mustard or ketchup before entering the house.

RIGHT #3—“ALL CHECKERS TO THE FRONT”

Going to the grocery store for Mom. So, the thought of cooking gives you the hives. No problem. You can still contribute greatly by doing the grocery shopping, and saving Mom the time, trouble, and strain of doing battle at the local market. Remember these two words: shopping list. Let's face it, left up to a guy, children would eat chocolate cake for breakfast, the only vegetables in a home would be on the painting hanging in the hallway, and Thanksgiving dinner would be ready as soon as the TV dinner could be removed from the microwave. When reaching the store, fight the urge to buy charcoal briquettes and lighter fluid. They're not necessary to cook oatmeal, sandwiches, and spaghetti. Finally, when traveling the store aisles, keep these rules in mind:

-No wheelies with shopping carts.

-Children are generally allowed 1 free cookie from the sample display. Telling your child to, “*Go ahead, take 6 for the road*” is rude.

-Stay to the right on aisles. No senior citizen should be forced to crash headfirst into the Spam display because you're in a hurry.

RIGHT #4—TIP TOP SHAPE

Encourage her to exercise, with you.

“Great. I knew this was coming. Listen, I couldn't run a 100-yard dash if you gave me a 75-yard head start!”

Don't be concerned. We're not talking about training for the Olympic Decathlon. During this time, a daily walk can be helpful for several reasons, including exercise, stress relief, and as an added benefit, some time for the two of you to spend together. So, peel yourself off the couch and drop the remote. (Or, if you're experiencing a severe case of separation anxiety, tie a rope to the remote and hang it around your neck.)

Whether you walk, ride, stretch, or bend, exercising with Mom can build muscle in your body and your relationship!

Randy Cunningham

RIGHT #5—“IS THE TOILET SELF-CLEANING?”

Take charge of housework. Let's be honest. For some guys out there, we're talking new and totally unfamiliar territory, so a quick introductory lesson is in order.

-No, the toilet is not self-cleaning. It must be scrubbed by hand. Yes, that is gross.

-Fairies and/or elves do not wash dishes left in the sink after meals. A human being actually takes care of this responsibility.

-Wet towels and underwear left on bathroom floors must be carried to washing machines. Refer to fairies and elves in previous sentence.

Guys, you can definitely jump to the major leagues with a great showing in this area. Want to see a mom's eyes light up with joy? Simply walk over and sit down next to her, look deeply into her eyes, and say, "*Sweetie, I actually cleaned under the toilet seat. And, I put down the lid.*" Make sure you bring a tissue for her tears. Don't worry, these are drops of delight.

"Fine. I can clean. But I can't cook. I could burn water. Get it?"

Got it. That's OK. Though Mom may need to cook, you can clean up. Yep, you're getting the "short end of the stick", but you're making her life so much easier. Also, for extra "Ultimate Dad" points during any type of cleanup, unhook the remote from around your neck, hand it to her, and mention, "*Why don't you sit down and watch a show that you'd like to see.*" Tears of joy, I tell you. Pure joy.

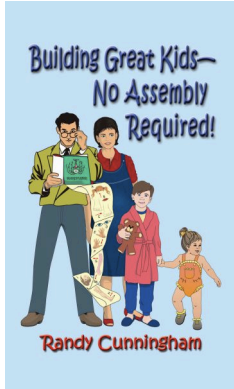
Yes, this can take lots of time, and yes, it's tough work.

Sort of like having a child.

Look what she went through for you!

HALFWAY THROUGH

Guys, are you hanging in there? See, it's easy becoming an "Ultimate" dad! The next section is for Mom, so take a break!



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