Parenting Together:
Men and Women Sharing the Care of Their Children

Ehrensaft, Dianne.

Reviewed by Elise Pflum

Although almost 15 years have passed since Parenting Together was first published, Dianne Ehrensaft’s study remains relevant today. Ehrensaft focuses on men and women who share parenting. In order to qualify for the sample, the husband and wife both needed to identify themselves as a primary caregiver in their family. Ehrensaft describes the co-parents in her study as men and women who have been influenced by the idea of gender egalitarianism promoted by the feminist movement in the late ’60s and early ’70s. The desire to share parenting is based upon the assumption that two fully involved parents will offer children a view of the world that is as free as possible from gender bias.

The first hurdle experienced by co-parents upon the birth of a child is the fixed biological barrier of breast feeding. Ehrensaft explains that fathers often experience jealousy since they are unable to participate in the feeding of the child. On the other hand, mothers often feel resentful about having to bear the entire burden of feeding. As a result, significant numbers of shared parenting families discontinue breast feeding within the first three months of a child’s life.

A key variable in shared parenting is the sense of comradery and mutual
Children’s Interests/Mothers’ Rights: The Shaping of America’s Child Care Policy

Michel, Sonya.

Reviewed by Merryl Hammond

Although dense and dry, *Children’s Interests/Mother’s Rights* is a meticulous, historical account of the child care system (or rather the lack thereof) in the United States, from its roots in the colonial era, through the early nineteenth century, the Victorian era, the Depression and World War II years, through to the present. Author Sonya Michel poses a central question: Why has the United States failed to develop a comprehensive system of public day care, when all the other democratic, market societies (Sweden, France, Japan, Australia, and Canada are mentioned briefly) have done so?

Readers learn about various child care options that working mothers in the United States have used over the centuries: “baby farms,” boarding institutions...