



Bright brained

IMPLEMENTING THE LATEST in infant brain-development research is simpler than you think. It isn't brain surgery; it's brain science. And Jill Stamm, Ph.D., co-founder of the New Directions Institute for Infant Brain Development, translates the latest neuroscience research into practical suggestions for parents in her new book, *Bright From the Start*. Stamm and co-author Paula Spencer give parents and caregivers the ABCs of parenting the very young:

- Attention: face-to-face time and a varied, naturally stimulating environment.
- Bonding: at least one consistent caregiver.
- Communication: exposure to spoken language.

Stamm and Spencer also dispel some myths—like the belief that playing a CD of Mozart will make your child automatically smarter. Sorry. Computer games for kids under 3? Nope. Their needs are far simpler. They need your time, your talk and interaction with you and caregivers.

"It is the amount of time you spend, not the amount of money," says Stamm, an associate clinical professor in the Department of Psychology in Education at Arizona State University. The 338-page book is available for \$17.16 on amazon.com. For more information about infant brain development, visit newdirectionsinstitute.org.



RAISING ARIZONA KIDS RADIO

Listen to Vicki Louk Balint's five-minute interview with author Jill Stamm, Ph.D. at raisingarizonakids.com.

A bag of tricks for cuts and nicks

WHEN A BEE STUNG Richelle Nassos's son, it got her thinking. Not long after, the Phoenix resident invented Medibag, a kid-friendly first-aid kit she markets through her company Me4kidz. The 117-item kit includes gauze pads, brightly colored bandages, gels, ointments, swabs and washes packed into a bright red,



personalized doctor bag. Richelle and her husband, Pete, run the local company. The bag is manufactured in Phoenix to maintain quality control and the kit is assembled at the non-profit Gompers Center, which has been providing job training and job placement for adults with disabilities for 60 years. \$19.95 on amazon.com. me4kidz.com.



PHOTOS BY DANIEL FRIEDMAN

Childsplay season will open in a new venue

CHILDSPLAY HAS COME a long way in the 30 years it has been performing around the Valley and state. Arizona's professional theater company for young audiences and families was founded in 1977 with four actors and a station wagon. The company has grown to encompass 60 employees, 700 performances a year and a \$3 million annual budget. It will open its 2007-08 season in the new, state-of-the-art Tempe Center for the Arts on the banks of Tempe Town Lake.

Childsplay also broke ground in June on a renovation project at the Mitchell School in Tempe. The new facility, which will be called the Sybil B. Harrington Campus for Imagination and Wonder at Mitchell Park, will house Childsplay's administrative offices, production shops,



the Childsplay Academy, a laboratory theater that seats 70 and a rehearsal hall, as well as collaborative space for other local arts organizations. Next month, the company opens a national tour of "Tomás and the Library Lady" in Hampton, Iowa, the setting for a story that inspires children to look beyond the confines of poverty, language barriers and cultural intolerance to find joy in reading. The play is based on the book of the same name by Pat Mora, with music adapted by José Cruz González. childsplayaz.org.