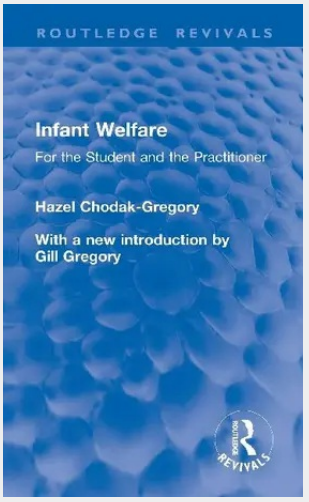
Chodak-Gregory / Gregory

Infant Welfare

For the Student and the Practitioner



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Infant Welfare: For The Student & Practitioner was published in 1926, at a time that saw the development of the new Infant Welfare centres, which began to appear in the UK in the late 19th century. The book sets out the ways in which The Mother & Child Welfare Act (1918) envisaged local authorities developing ways to improve outcomes for both mothers and young children. Infant Welfare also provides invaluable practical detail concerning the requirements of the new Welfare centres. The aims of the centres were the maintenance of health in infants & young children, the education of mothers, treatment of minor ailments and the early detection of disease. Chodak-Gregory emphasizes the preventative nature of the work, with nurses and health visitors gaining a knowledge of the specific living conditions of individual families. She also stresses the importance of air and sunlight in a child's life, in line with the Open-Air Schools movement, which had also taken off in the early twentieth century. The centres were, for the first time, giving mothers the time and space to voice their concerns. Infant Welfare discusses the need for positive doctor-patient and doctor-nurse relationships in order to achieve the best outcomes for mothers and children. The author's views on the doctor's workload resonate just as much today with NHS staff under enormous pressure as when the book was originally published. Fathers are absent in this book, as if they have no role in childcare, and it is the mothers who are addressed, at times in an overly prescriptive voice, reflective of the class divide at the time, but Chodak-Gregory also recognises the immense difficulties working-class women faced. Infant Welfare reflects the growing significance of women's contribution to medicine and to wider society. There has been much written on infant welfare & working-class maternity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the past few decades. Chodak-Gregory's Infant Welfare is an important document by a pioneering female doctor. It bears witness to the commitment of the doctors, nurses and voluntary workers involved and to the working-class women, who attended the Infant Welfare centres, bringing the materiality of their lives into close focus. Now available again in print and for the first time as an ebook, this reissue contains a substantial new biographical introduction by Dr. Gill Gregory as well as a new preface by Dr. Anthony Hulse, President, British Society for the History of Paediatrics and Child Health.

Infant Welfare was published in 1926 and provides invaluable detail concerning the newly established Infant Welfare centres. The book reflects the growing significance of women's contribution to medicine and to wider society and is an important work by a pioneering female doctor with a substantial new introduction.

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Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | kundenservice@otto-schmidt.de | 0221-93738-997 (Inland)