Babysitting Basics Caring for Kids, Leah Browning, Jul 1, 2006, Family & Relationships, 32 pages. "An overview for pre-teens and teens of the many aspects of babysitting"--Provided by publisher..


Baby-Sitting Safe and Sound, Dorothy R. O'Connell, 1990, Family & Relationships, 115 pages. An expert in the field of child care offers a practical guide to baby-sitting that outlines procedures for feeding, diapering, disciplining, and entertaining, as well as steps....

African cosmology of the Bantu-Kongo tying the spiritual knot: principles of life & living, Kimbwandende Kia Bunseki Fu-Kiau, Fu-Kiau Bunselti, 2001, Religion, 159 pages. Dr Bunseki is one of the great scholars of African religion and the leading authority on the Bantu-Kongo civilisation. He is also a genuine practitioner of the Kongo spiritual....

Magical child rediscovering nature's plan for our children, Joseph Chilton Pearce, Apr 1, 1977, , 257 pages. Shows the ways in which we thwart the child from learning all there is to know about his world and suggests approaches to recovering our genetic capacity for creative intelligence.

Dear Babysitter, Vicki Lansky, 1987, Family & Relationships, 55 pages. A comprehensive handbook for parents to give babysitters before going out, wherein babysitters can find information for every type of situation from child temper tantrums to....


Baby-Sitting Smarts, Jil Fine, Sep 1, 2002, Family & Relationships, 48 pages. Provides tips for teens on learning and practicing good babysitting skills, getting babysitting jobs, preparing for a particular job, handling emergencies, and duties after the....


Self-Healing Power and Therapy, K. Kia Bunseki Fu-Kiau, , , , , .

BLAST! Babysitter Lessons and Safety Training, , Jun 6, 2006, Family & Relationships, 64 pages. Provides tips and guidelines for babysitters, including the basics on how to care for children, what to do if a child needs first aid, and how to stay safe while babysitting. 

Be a Great Babysitter!, James Mack, Jul 1, 2008, Juvenile Nonfiction, 56 pages. Explains the responsibilities and duties of being a babysitter and offers advice on common behaviors, gaining trust, and practicing safety.

The Babysitter Book Everything You and Your Babysitter Need to Know Before You Leave the House, Jane Crowley Pardini, 1996, Family & Relationships, 111 pages. Easing the way for caretakers as well as nervous parents, a compendium of information, in both English and Spanish, includes phone numbers; emergency instructions; sections to....

Be a Better Babysitter, Annie Buckley, Aug 15, 2006, , 32 pages. Gives tips and advice for babysitters, including how to break the ice with children and what information to get from parents before they leave.
To the people of the Western world, babysitting is usually merely a means to make some extra money, chatter with friends on the phone, and raid their host's refrigerators. However, to the people of Africa, particularly the Bantu, babysitting is an art. Both K. Kia Bunseki Fu-Kiau and A.M. Lukondo-Wamba present the importance and consequences of this African tradition in Kindezi: The Kongo Art of Babysitting.

I read K. Kia Bunseki Fu-Kiau and A.M. Lukondo-Wamba's Kindezi: The Kongo Art of Babysitting, a scant 41-page treatise on child rearing or, as the authors proclaim, "how to teach your children and yourself TO BE AFRIKAN" with the expectation that it would affirm the propriety of mothers staying with their young babies and children. I expected that babysitters (ndezi) would play a secondary role in child rearing. I further expected that from a holistic perspective, and recognizing how all-consuming motherhood can be, babysitters would play a primary role in supporting or nurturing women as they set about this most important journey of mothering. In my mind, I craved a bona fide source to reconcile scattered anecdotes from African peoples I have met in my life and my own romanticized notions of how things are done in the putatively most family-centered continent and humanity's native land, Africa.

Often in the United States, people repeat the storied African proverb, "it takes a village to raise a child." Still, how to form such a village in a modern American society where work-life balance is illusive; maternity leave is unpaid and not guaranteed; and non-familial daycare is the status quo is a complicated matter. This book would be my inspiration, or so I thought.

"Without Kindezi [the art of babysitting], the African woman would never experience the great amount of freedom she enjoys. Nor would she occupy the position she occupies in matters of land control and economic productivity. Contrary to the Western woman, an African woman is more a farmer than her fellow man. The African woman, in this perspective, is way more self-entrepreneurial ... The African woman stays on her farm from morning to the fall of night. (p.20)"
parents. Babysitters are after all the main shapers of personality and teachers, especially of political consciousness. (Pp.20, 36).

Lest I be unfair, I must acknowledge that children under age two are carried as necessary by their babysitters near to their mothers' work for breastfeeding. (p.18) As well, I did feel some appeal to the argument that elders are the best suited to transmit values given their more vast life experience and training. As I considered Kindezi though, I wondered how this so-called Kongo Art is distinguishable then from customs in the United States, which correlate to, I think, counterintuitive (perhaps perverse) attitudes about women. I understand that the care and quality inherent in the "babysitting" by elders and others in the Kongo, with its multi-tiered structure, may be superior to typical daycare in the U.S. (The query of whether and how informal schooling past preschool age in the Kongo compares with post-preschool formal schooling stateside, I set aside.) What I find difficult to accept, however, is that the highest possibility for women the world over and our calling is to be freed from the children that we bear for nine (actually ten) months, who learn in the womb to know our voice and smell, and for whom our breasts are filled with milk -- the perfect food -- for their development during the critical early years. It has seemed to me that God or nature, if you will, created women to be with child. Yet even on the Continent, per these authors, cultural ideology has determined that is an inferior position to occupy. I wrote this article, at various points one-handed, while nursing, cradling and soothing back to sleep my 8-month-old daughter, my first born child. And I've still one question: When did it become a greater burden to women to be with their children than to be without them?

Asante for this post. When my sister had my niece, she dropped absolutely everything--and moved back to the continent--to be with her for 2.5 years. It wasn't easy--she's a single mom--but, having witnessed the resulting relationship, and the ways in which it has grounded both my niece and my sister, I can't imagine that I won't do the same.

I think it's worth noting that illiteracy rates on The Continent are still appallingly high, which means that the ability to read and write becomes a divider that separates the rich from the poor, the haves from the have-nots, the Western-leaning from the African-centered. In many places, and for many Africans, adopting the colonizer's language, tools, etc. has meant giving up the 'language of intimacy' and the related beliefs and values. All that to say that folks who are 'formally' educated on The Continent aren't necessarily the best representatives of what the mamas and babas in the village--those most closely connected to traditions that span generations, and many of whom can't read and write in the colonizer's language--know about rearing watoto, and more generally, living healthy and sustainable lives that honor African traditions.

There's also the issue of the books subtitle ("...how to teach your children and yourself TO BE AFRIKAN") which I take issue with, and view as a reductive concept. Is the idea that there are litmus tests of sorts that pave the ways to be 'authentically' Afric/kan? Isn't that something you just are, rather that something you become?

I haven't read the book, but recently heard a speech in which Dr. Fu-Kiau said: (paraphrasing) if I had the power I would impose a law that said all mothers should have 12 months maternal leave with full salary". So, I question if he sees the model of Kongolese babysitting as an ideal or a stopgap. As the author suggests: "I understand that the care and quality inherent in the "babysitting" by elders and others in the Kongo, with its multi-tiered structure, may be superior to typical daycare in the U.S."

Dr. John Henrik Clarke talks economics and definitions of success / "Manufacturing is a move toward nationhood, toward the restoration of self-reliance and management of nations and the maintenance of nations. I'm not just talking about the physical, I'm talking about the nation frame of mind, that is portable, that you can take with you wherever you go. You've got to either have the nation or the nation frame of mind in order to be whole or secure"

Two books have inspired me and my love for our elders, one I just recently received in the mail and finished it the same day! Kindezi The Kongo Art of BabySitting, by the brilliand K. Kia Bunseki
Fu-Kiau and A.M. Lukondo-Wamba. This one has an introduction by the powerful scholar, Dr. Marimba Ani. The other book is called, The Way Of The Elders, West African Spirituality & Tradition by Adama and Naomi Doumbia Ph.D.

Both works go into a brief but important understanding of the role of Eldership in the Afrikan communities. We need to link our youth and ourselves to them posthaste. Without this link we are damned I feel. We remain disconnected from our recent past and disconnected from that wonderful ancestral memories under the roots of that silvery hair they may have. In order to recognize an elder we should be able to...err...ummmm...recognize an elder! According to the Doumbias, from The Way of The Elders, “ We hold in high esteem those who come before us and possess more experience and wisdom...our elders are fluent in the language of our ancestors...They teach us all of the prohibitions, violations, and remedies for our communities...Elders are our negotiator, moderators and counselors.”

This description of elders puts a lot of responsibility not only on the elders but on us to learn of whom an elder is and to follow that wisdom they give us. From Kindezi we learn in the intro by Dr. Marimba Ani, “Elders in Afrikan Society are those who have become physically more frail, but who are spiritually stronger because they have grown further in personal development and have moved closer to the Ancestors, to the spiritual world and to the “Source of Life” itself (Kalunga). An “elder” is not just an “old person,” but is someone still “mentally and spiritually strong and wise enough not only to maintain the community united but, above all, to build the moral foundation of the community of youth and of generations to come.”

The elders are crucial to child development and the promotion of the holistic health of the community. We speak all the time of the children being the “future” but provide them with no elders stable enough to be that foundation of wisdom upon which they can develop properly. For our well-being it is crucial that we have that intergenerational transmission of not only information but the wisdom to use that information. We must have valuable energy transference between the men and women in our communities and the elders who hold that special place or rather should hold that place. It is incumbent upon us to make the connection between the elders and our children.

In our individual communities we can make the process start by finding wise and learned Afrikan elders, and gathering the children in a formal or informal setting to sit at their feet. Have the children ask basic questions about the elder’s lives and let the elder just go at it! Please feed the elders, do for them, assist them and if you can pay them something for their precious time. We need to bring our minds and spirits to them and the minds and spirits of our children to them. This will not only show we have reverence for them but our willingness to learn further and take on the mantle of liberation!!

Our elders are our greatest strength that links to our past and truly can lead us into the future.... i have a love for all our elders i have learned so much from them. I encourage all the neighborhood kids to sit and talk to their grandparents , just older people in general because there is so much that can be learned from them....

Kindezi, the art of babysitting, is an old art among Africans, in general, and the Bantu in particular. It is basically the art of touching, caring for, and protecting the child’s life and the environment, kinzungidila, in which the child’s multidimensional development takes place. The word, ‘Kindezi,’ a Kikongo language term, stems itself from the root verb, lela which means to enjoy taking {care of} and giving special care.

To babysit---lela, to give special care—is first of all, a way of transferring social patterns to the community’s youngest members. And, secondly, it is the child’s orientation for life which comprises very well determined directions according to community norms and values. As such, the Kindezi/Kindesi may vary from one society to another with respect to individual systems and their values.

Because of these philosophical views about Kindezi among African people and the Kongo in
particular, babysitting is considered to be a therapeutic method highly recommended in helping old people (while using them as babysitters) deal with their diverse social, psychological, and/or gerontologically related problems. For young babysitters the Kindezi is seen as a social preadaption/preparation toward fatherhood/motherhood responsibilities. It is also programmed for this last group as a learning experience for life and a way of acquiring the forbearance that makes for good mothers and good fathers. Very often young couples without children are required, in the Kongo society, to babysit for community members (extended family) as a preparation for the coming of their own children.

Historically speaking, Kindezi has existed in Africa since time immemorial, but its real development began during the precolonial period when mothers, without any exception, were obliged to take arms like their fellow men, not only to fight against the invasion of their territories, but also to lead the wars. (2) The development of Kindezi for these purposes continued on and became common during colonization with the introduction of new crops in Africa that required enormous effort and time for cultivation. This was a time during which both father and mother were 'transformed' to beasts of burden by the world-exploiting powers under the cover of the 'civilized mission.' Both men and women worked for the 'corvee' (forced and free labor) in the creation of roads, conveyance, production of products of exportation, and so on. Mothers and fathers were unable to take care of their children as they had been accustomed to. The burden, consequently, fell upon old people's shoulders and/or upon the youngest ones who were below the recruiting age for the corvee.

It is the creation of this hardest but most beautiful art, Kindezi, of the art of caring for the child's life and the social environment into which this care and this development stem under such difficult, indeed, cruel circumstances, that we devote this study. The philosophical concepts of Kindezi described here are based upon Kongo culture.

2. The African woman always has been involved in almost all activities of life: social, economic, as well as military. During the precolonial era she had been as her fellow man, a good general in the army. This is the case of Nzing'a Matamba and Vita-Kimpa in the ancient Kingdom of the Kongo, who, as army generals, led the anticolonial war.

"In his ground-breaking work Self Healing Power and Therapy Dr. Fu-Kiau tells us that muntu (the human being), the 'living sun,' is perceived as a 'power,' 'a phenomenon of perpetual veneration from conception to death' and beyond. Kindezi is about the process of how this 'living sun' is nurtured once he/she has been brought into the physical world. The task of caring for this sacred muntu is the most important responsibility in Afrikan civilization.

Dr. Fu-kiau intentionally translates Kindezi as the art of babysitting to shock us. My immediate impression upon reading the subtitle of his book was to question him, respectfully pointing out what seemed to be a mistaken translation—a poor choice of an English term. Dr. Fu-Kiau's response was given in his characteristically soft, patient, and considerate manner, which forces one to hang on his every word, convinced that wisdom is about to be bestowed. He explained that in European culture "babysitting" is thought to be an insignificant activity—a job for the least important people in our society. We know that "teenagers," who supposedly have nothing important to do, are given this task, and Afrikan women are imported from the Caribbean to care for European-American children as a testament to our alleged racial inferiority. Yet, according to the authors of this book, Kindezi is the greatest honor that can be bestowed upon a person in Afrikan society.

Fu-Kiau is bringing home the point, in a sharply critical manner, that while childhood is devalued in European society, Afrikan civilization is child-centered. This becomes clear as we understand human life in the context of spiritual community: a never-ending process of growth, development, transformation and accountability. The well-being of the community depends on the health and wholeness, the successful maturation of the persons who constitute its membership.

The Afrikan art and practice of Kindezi places great importance on the presence of "elders" in the community and their responsibility for the health and wholeness of the group. By linking the elders to the youth of the society, the concept stresses intergenerational continuity, meaningful
communication, consistency of value formation and transmission, and mutual responsibility and accountability. This brings us to the contemporary relevance of this book.... The g forced Diaspora. Since the greatest challenge that faces people of Afrikan descent displaced from our grounding in the Motherland is social fragmentation, disconnectedness and exiologial or value confusion. The spiritual strength of ur enslaved Ancestors brought us through the brutal and inhumane disruption of the Maafa. They did this by finding ways to raise their children and teach them values. Indeed the only source of resistance available to us was the strength of our spirit--our "Soul-Force" (Leonard Barrett)---which we used to continually recreate community. This sense of community was always a strong and powerful force on which Afrikan descendants have depended during the major historical periods of our saga in this forced Diaspora. Since the 1960's, however, which appeared on the surface to bring what many thought were political and economic gains, our cultural consciousness has deteriorated. The importance of family has diminished in our minds, and the increased exposure to the destructive forces of American society has successfully eaten away at the fabric of our social institutions.