

no matter how well she mothers and how much her mothering means to the child. The absence of the “real” mother contributes to mothers-in-all-but-name feeling under-recognized and under-valued in their mothering role.

In addition, many women—grandmothers, aunts, sisters, neighbours, or friends who love both mother and child—regularly mother children who do have “good” mothers. In these cases, the good mother shares her child’s care with another woman who generously cares for her child. Grandmothers, in particular, provide ample mothering assistance that is well appreciated. Yet, no one names these mothering women “mothers.” We lack language that distinguishes mothers-in-all-but-name from biological mothers and from those of us who assist but do not replace biological mothers.

A diversity of race, ethnicity, and social class is represented in this volume. Some women are professionals whose narratives probe issues beyond their own experiences. Stephanie Wasserman’s “Mothering Foster Children” is particularly informative. Candace Simar’s “Other Mothering” highlights the pain of having to relinquish care of children to home situations that are less than ideal. These narratives, which explore non-normative experience, bring new perspectives to motherhood. Bouvard is to be commended for highlighting “the many permutations of mothering and the circumstances surrounding it” (4) and for acknowledging these relationships for the benefit of “mothers” and children alike.

Mother to Mother: Honest Advice From Women Who Have Been Through It Already

Kathleen F. McCue.

Amarillo, Texas: Hale Publishing, 2012.

Reviewed by Janet E. Smith

Kathleen F. McCue’s new book, *Mother to Mother*, functions as a “new mothers group.” It is composed entirely of answers from 57 new mothers to questions posed by McCue. The answers are intended to guide new mothers in caring for newborns and gauging the prevalence and “normalcy” of their experiences. Not all mothers replied to every question, but enough did to make this book a useful resource for women adjusting to new motherhood.

The book includes 23 chapters on a wide range of topics, including family issues; breastfeeding issues; coping strategies; helpful (and not so helpful) gadgets; classes; books; online websites; suggestions and advice from other

mothers. The final four chapters, written by different mothers, address “what I wish I knew about early motherhood.”

Many breastfeeding mothers reported that advice was inadequate, that their usual ways of assessing situations and educating themselves no longer held, and many were left with devastating feelings of inadequacy. One mother (who had earned a doctorate) no longer benefited from her usual strategies for learning; just when a problem seemed to be solved, the problem changed, and once again she was unable to help her baby well enough. She kept seeking the aid of resource people and finally found one who was very helpful; yet, she concluded, as did many other mothers, that the “ride it out, it is over fast enough” solution worked best.

McCue recommends nurses and lactation consultants (like herself), but often they gave inadequate and conflicting advice. Evidently, the complexity of breastfeeding is still under-recognized in the formal health care system. If mothers do not receive the information and guidance they need to successfully breastfeed their infants, they cannot be blamed when difficulties arise.

McCue’s book is intended for mothers of newborns and infants. Hence, it lacks the kind of demographic analysis that would be useful to academics, nurses, midwives, and lactation consultants. It offers invaluable advice, however, for mothers who worry when their babies are having difficulty breathing, sucking, or sleeping; being alone in a bassinet; suffering with allergies, skin rashes, or life-threatening problems. A section on the safety of clothing and wraps would have been a useful addition to the volume. Most importantly, McCue encourages new mothers to trust their own observations and instincts.

Mother Talk: Conversations with Mothers of Lesbian Daughters and FTM Transgender Children

Sarah F. Pearlman.

Bradford, ON: Demeter Press, 2012.

Reviewed by Alison McEwen

The voices of those who have come out as lesbian or gay are represented in many books and today are heard in a number of fora. Less frequently heard are the voices of those women who mother lesbian, gay, and transgender individuals. Sarah Pearlman’s book, *Mother Talk*, offers 24 stories told by women whose children have come out either as lesbian or female-to-male (FTM) transgender.