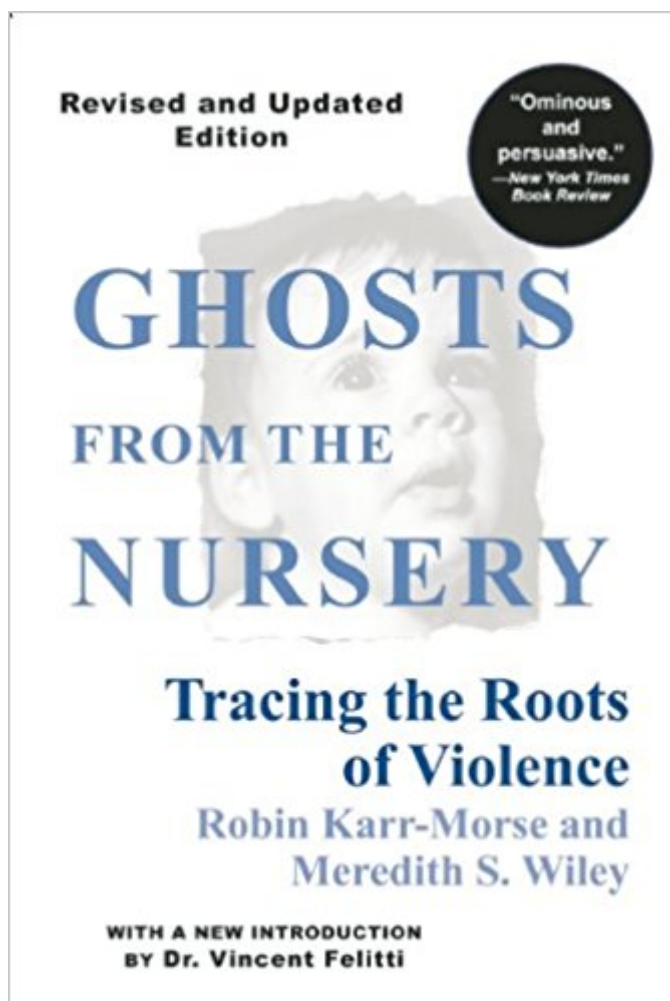


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# Ghosts From The Nursery: Tracing The Roots Of Violence



## Synopsis

This new, revised edition incorporates significant advances in neurobiological research over the past decade, and includes a new introduction by Dr. Vincent J. Felitti, a leading researcher in the field. When *Ghosts from the Nursery: Tracing the Roots of Violence* was published in 1997, it was lauded for providing scientific evidence that violence can originate in the womb and become entrenched in a child's brain by preschool. The authors' groundbreaking conclusions became even more relevant following the wave of school shootings across the nation including the tragedy at Columbine High School and the shocking subsequent shootings culminating most recently in the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. Following each of these media coverage and public debate turned yet again to the usual suspects concerning the causes of violence: widespread availability of guns and lack of mental health services for late-stage treatment. Discussion of the impact of trauma on human life—especially early in life during chemical and structural formation of the brain—is missing from the equation. Karr-Morse and Wiley continue to shift the conversation among parents and policy makers toward more fundamental preventative measures against violence.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Hardly a week goes by without a headline screaming out the details of another heinous crime committed by an adolescent or young child. A 14-year-old massacres his classmates at a school prayer circle, two even younger boys fire into a crowd of middle school children killing five people, a

student kills his teacher at the school prom. There is no doubt that crimes committed by children are increasing at an alarming rate and the big question is why? The authors of *Ghosts from the Nursery* produce compelling if not controversial evidence that violent behavior is learned and cultivated in the first few months of childhood development. Even more startling, the authors Robin Karr-Morse and Meredith S. Wiley believe that a predisposition to violent behavior can be learned before birth. A "chemical wash" of toxins such as drugs and alcohol, combined with a mother's stress hormones generated from rage or fear can directly effect the babies brain development. Illustrative case studies and anecdotes make for a fascinating and factually "fat" read. Lacking in the book is an acknowledgment of the larger picture--not all children raised in violent homes will become violent, and on an even larger scale, there is no mention of other contributing factors leading to teen violence. Would crimes be cut if guns weren't so readily available? Still, *Ghosts from the Nursery* is an engrossing book, which is bound to generate hot debate in the scientific world. --Naomi Gesinger

--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"*Ghosts from the Nursery* is ominous and persuasive. . . . [Karr-Morse and Wiley] join a growing chorus of childhood development experts in insisting that, to be effective, programs seeking to insure the welfare of children must intervene even before birth. . . . The unspoken message of *Ghosts from the Nursery* is more sobering still. It seems we have strayed so far from common sense and sensitivity in child rearing that we must rely on brain scans and F.B.I. statistics to remind us of what babies have always needed to thrive: attention, nourishment, stability and love." #151;The New York Times Book Review

"A deeply disturbing wake-up call." #151;Publishers Weekly

"Karr-Morse and Wiley boldly raise some tough issues. . . . [They] start with a grim question#151;why are children violent?#151;and they forge a passionate and cogent argument for focusing our collective energies on infancy and parenthood to stop the cycle of ruined lives." #151;The Seattle Times

"An expert, disturbing and vitally important book . . . . If the problem of violence in America concerns you, read this book. You will be given no quick fixes. You are given truth. And it's truth all of us need to know." #151;Statesman Journal

"An alarming book with national scope. . . . [Its] methodical approach tying childhood development to recent research about the brain pushes us one step further down the road to dealing two intersecting and important issues: how to protect society from its growing pocket of violent citizens and how to protect children from the abuse and neglect that lead to membership in that terrible club." #151;The Portland Oregonian

"This book will make you realize as never before the importance of the 0-3-year period in every child's life. *Ghosts from the Nursery* shows the heavy price society pays for child

abuse and neglect. This book skillfully takes a very real and frightening issue and encourages us to work harder to end it." &#151;Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, United States Senate"Right! Right! Right! This easy-to-read book is right on track for helping guide policy makers and parents about America's most precious resource . . . her children. I highly recommend it." &#151;Dr. Ken Magid, author of *High Risk: Children Without a Conscience*"The first three years of life are crucial not only to children but also to the whole society in which they live and grow and eventually reproduce. It is in the context of the self-interest even of those who care least for small children that this book appeals for child-friendly practices and policies&#151;and should be widely heard." &#151;Penelope Leach, Ph.D., author of *Children First*"Essential reading for anyone interested in the roots of violence and in finding ways of reducing violence in our society." &#151;Geraldine Dawson, Professor of Psychology, University of Washington, and editor of *Human Behavior and the Developing Brain*"Robin Karr-Morse and Meredith Wiley are to be applauded for so successfully tracing the roots of violence to the complex early relations between brain and behavioral development. The story they tell is one that should be heard, and the warning bells they sound should be our wake-up call to do better by our children." &#151;Charles A. Nelson, Professor of Child Psychology, Pediatrics, and Neuroscience, University of Minnesota"In this remarkable and timely book, Robin Karr-Morse and Meredith Wiley interweave the compelling narrative of a child who has committed a violent crime with a comprehensive description of current relevant studies on attachment disturbances and brain development (many of which are being presented to the informed public for the first time) in order to convincingly argue that the roots of violence are cultivated in infancy. . . . The essential question is how we as a society can transform this pragmatic knowledge into very early prevention programs." &#151;Allan N. Schore, Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, University of California at Los Angeles School of Medicine"Ghosts from the Nursery is an impressive book. As I read it I found myself wishing that I had had all the information and wisdom in this book back when I started working with children. The authors have done a wonderful job of digesting and presenting various complex areas and issues in a clear, entertaining fashion. It is a rare combination of skill, insight and intelligence that produced this book." &#151;Bruce D. Perry, MD, Ph.D."[Karr-Morse and Wiley] clearly and powerfully elucidate why children are capable of the most heinous crimes possible and why violence has reached epidemic proportions. The future is bleak for all of us if we do not heed the warnings of children in need of nurturing, guidance and concerned parenting. This is a clear, well-researched book that deserves wide reading." &#151;Matilda Raffa Cuomo"Violence is one of the most compelling problems of our time, not only in our nation , but around the world. Ghosts from the Nursery is a

major contribution to a new understanding of this issue. The premises set forth are backed with hard data from many relevant sources and it is written in an elegant and interesting literary style. I highly recommend it." &#151;Dr. Stella Chess, MD"Ghosts from the Nursery is a must read book for those who seek to repair shattered lives&#151;and those who seek to prevent the shattering. An important book for people who try to make the world a more civilized place." &#151;Craig Ramey, Director, Civitan International Research Center

This is an incredibly well-researched book and I wish the people who are so blithely focused on cutting food stamps could read about the consequences of their actions. Anyone who is interested in this general area, which is probably anyone who cares about kids and people should read the book. I downgraded it one star because the emphasis is so much on permanent damage and dire consequences and there is not enough emphasis on repair, on the amazing capacity of the human being to overcome so much of this, or if there was I missed it.

This excellently written and informative book is a must read for those who want to know how to significantly reduce crime and other anti-social behavior in the most productive, cost-effective way. As noted in the book, it is the brain that causes a person to commit a crime or otherwise engage in anti-social behavior. Ghosts from the Nursery shows that from conception to age two is the best time to positively influence a child's brain development. As an attorney handling child abuse and neglect cases for nearly two decades, I always thought Head Start was the answer for giving a child a positive future. After reading this book and the hundreds of scientific studies referenced in the book, Head Start is actually late in the game (though still very helpful) in giving a child the tools to do well in school and life. The book explains that it is in utero when most of a person's brain cells develop and start creating pathways for future learning. From birth to age two is when a child expands those pathways and how he or she relates to the world and other people. The book is also an important read for prospective parents so that they realize how critical conception to age two is for their child's development and future. The author's second book, Scared Sick: The Role of Childhood Trauma in Adult Disease is a great companion, as it explains the biology and epigenetic science behind the information in Ghosts. My hope is that every elected official in America will read these books, so that they will understand why spending tax dollars on parenting, education, and prevention programs will save literally hundreds of billions of dollars of tax dollars in the future, while creating more tax producers and fewer tax dollar users.

Solid information for careful parenting. Detailed explanation of the importance of protecting and nurturing the child, from inception to adulthood, with emphasis on how early physical and/or physiological trauma impacts human development.

A fascinating look at how parent- child dynamics can have lifelong effects for the child; this book does a good job of tying its science to real stories and real people. It's relatively old, but still a good read and thought- provoking regardless of whether or not you have children.

We all know that every decision made, big or small, "makes ripples in the water". As a nation we under estimate some of our decisions calling them small when in fact they become more and more like a tsunami. This book covers more of the science of how it can affect a baby before conception. It's a great read, for an informational book (which I don't like to read) it's a 'hard to keep down' book. Once owned and misplaced in a move, I had to ordered it again... I only wish I read it before I had my children.

One of the best books read during my graduate training. One of my supervisors advised me to read it since I expressed my interest in working with infants and children. Working at a community mental health setting you get to see a lot of psychopathology secondary to neglect and abuse. This book helps you conceptualize clients better and helps understand the root of many of their presenting problems.

Unfortunately, the section of the population who need this information the most will never read it. What a terrible waste of young lives due to the selfishness of parents. Wish we could abolish all the government programs that cost billions of dollars and do not begin to fix the problems and start over to save these children. Nothing sadder than a child with no hope.

If you are intersted in Mind Body Connection, the brain, why people act and do the things they do...you'll love this book. I don't think every hypothesis is spot on, yet the information is very interesting, and I highly recommend. Easy read. Still doesn't explain how some children come from horrible homes and turn out fine, while others whither under the same circumstances...so it can't all be explained...but for what can...

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