

## Safety Smart Science with Bill Nye the Science Guy: Fire ★★★

(2009) 25 min. DVD: \$39.95 (teacher's guide included). Disney Educational Productions. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 1-59753-220-7.

The overall message of this fast-paced fire safety video from the *Safety Smart Science with Bill Nye the Science Guy* series is that "fire is the servant, not the master." Going far beyond the traditional "stop, drop, and roll" approach, *Fire* illustrates how understanding the science of fire will help enable viewers to control it. Host Bill Nye goes behind the scenes at Underwriters Laboratories, one of the most well-established product safety certifying organizations in the world, where—in extremely controlled situations—we see multiple items bursting into flames, including a complete living room (in under four minutes!). Viewers will also learn basic safety regarding kitchen fires, getting out of a burning room, and keeping a healthy respect for an open flame, but the main lesson here—reiterated in a variety of creative ways—revolves around identifying and controlling the three elements a fire requires: heat, oxygen, and fuel. DVD extras on this classroom edition include bonus featurettes, an interactive safety smart quiz, classroom activities, and a downloadable educator's guide. An

informative and entertaining guidance program, this is recommended. Aud: E, I, P. (E. Gieschen)

## HEALTH & FITNESS

### If You Have... Back Pain ★★★

(2003) 35 min. DVD: \$24.99. BayView Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

Certified strength trainer Kendyl Singh is the instructor for this workout program designed to help alleviate back pain through targeted exercise. Stating that 80% of the populace experience some back pain (with 20% suffering from chronic back pain), this instructional guide explores back anatomy (deep core muscles and relevant vertebrae) through detailed graphics and onscreen vocabulary. The focus of the workout itself is on improving strength, function, and alignment through a range of 25 dynamic and static exercises, including leg and diagonal extensions, ab crunches, cat stretch, bridges, and more (with modifications for both low-impact and more advanced approaches). Set against the backdrop of Banff National Park's lovely Lake Louise in Alberta, Canada, this is recommended. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

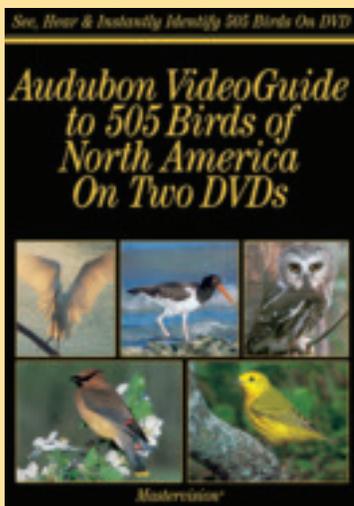
## CHILDBIRTH & PARENTING

### Better Breastfeeding: A Guide for Teen Parents ★★★

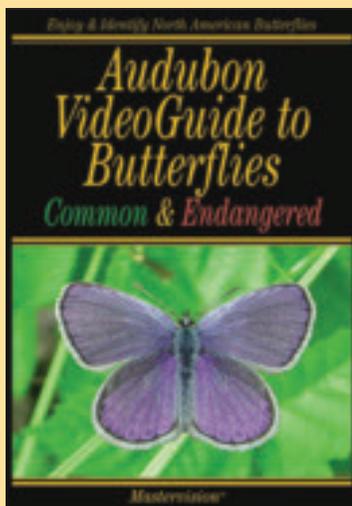
(2008) 28 min. DVD or VHS: \$99.95: public libraries; \$159.95: high schools, colleges & universities. Facilitator's guide included. Enjoy Videos. PPR. Closed captioned. Also available in Spanish.

*Better Breastfeeding: A Guide for Teen Parents* is an informative program covering the basics of breastfeeding, from an overview of how breasts produce milk to dealing with problems such as engorged breasts or sore nipples. Combining overlaid narration with scenes of mothers demonstrating successful breastfeeding, the program points out the benefits of breastfeeding for both babies and mothers, while also detailing the risks associated with using formula as cited by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Viewers learn about various breastfeeding positions and the importance of a "good latch" (i.e., the optimal connection between the baby's mouth and the nipple). Colorful animations illustrate milk production, a baby's sucking function, and how much babies should eat and eliminate (represented in stacks of diapers), while mothers are repeatedly

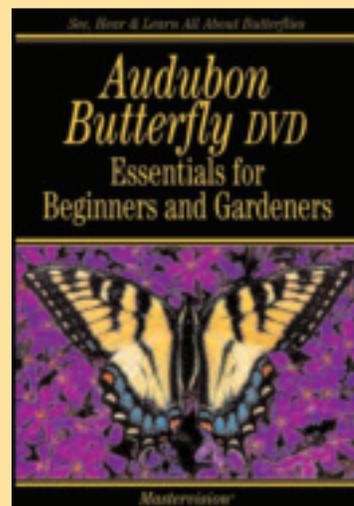
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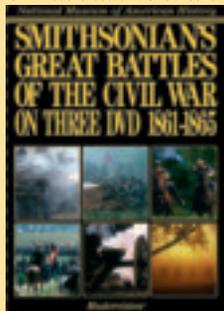
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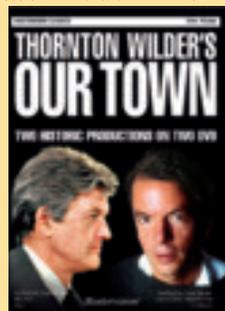
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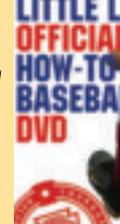
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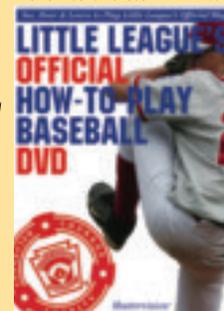
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encouraged to develop a support system and ask questions. A closing segment on "The Breastfeeding Life" looks at diet, rest, and exercise for mothers; feeding in public places; and the dangers of ingesting anything that a baby should not. Distinguished from InJoy's other titles for more mature moms by its

colorful production values, depth of basic information, and encouraging tone, *Better Breastfeeding* includes reminders that birth control is essential to preventing another pregnancy and that breastfeeding is a good money-saving strategy (breastfeeding moms can save enough money on formula in six

months to buy a new sofa!). Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (M. Puffer-Rothenberg)

### Single Parenting: The Family in Harmony ★★★

(2008) 2 videocassettes or 2 discs. 58 min. DVD or VHS: \$149.95; public libraries; \$249.95; high schools, colleges & universities. Facilitator's guide included. InJoy Videos. PPR. Closed captioned. Also available in Spanish.

Offering advice and inspiration for single parents, this two-volume set combines voiceover narration, interviews with a cross-section of parents and children, and comments from a family therapist, all addressing the subject of maintaining emotional health within the family. Mothers featured here range from a 19-year-old college student with a four-month-old daughter to a middle-aged woman whose son is autistic, while fathers include an older military retiree and a man who became a dad at the age of 17 and has never lived with his daughter's mom. The first volume, *Creating a Healthy Life for Yourself*, covers a wide range of topics, including continuing education, balancing work and childcare, budgeting and financial responsibilities, taking time for personal growth, and co-parenting (highlighting tips for communicating with the other parent, and underscoring the benefits to children of

### A Baby Story: First-Time Parents Edition ★★★

(2008) 209 min. DVD: \$14.95. Genius Products (avail. from most distributors).

TLC's Emmy Award-winning series *A Baby Story* follows 10 first-time parents from the final weeks of pregnancy through the first few weeks of infancy, combining documentary footage with interviews and video-diary excerpts. Each episode is devoted to a particular couple, although several of the profiled pairs follow similar courses: the Cecchinis, Havens, Hanley-Everitts, and Blands, for instance, opt for natural childbirth, but Randi Cecchini's thoughts about a pharmaceutical-free event change once the contractions start. The Havens also worry that managing a restaurant will prove more difficult with a baby (as Brian Haven notes in his diary, "Pregnancy causes gray hair...and if you pull out one, three more come back"). Other parents, who range in age from 20s-40s, cope with in-laws, mood swings, false labor, and unusual pets (a hairless cat). Balancing the professional with the personal, the series also features birthing experts—from doulas to doctors—who share their thoughts and advice. *A Baby Story* keeps cuteness and melodrama at bay for the most part, although given the fact that 10 births are presented, the series features plenty of screaming and crying (although blurring and careful camera placement provide some degree of privacy). Recommended. Aud: P. (K. Femmessy)



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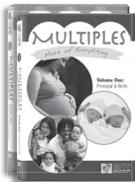


With help from a team of childbirth educators, we have completely re-created our award-winning bestseller, *Understanding Birth*. This powerful DVD uses 3D animation, genuine birth footage, and illuminating parent commentary to provide expectant parents with important research-based information they need to prepare for their own birth experience.

2009 • 135 min.

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2008 • 25 min.

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2008 • 19 min.

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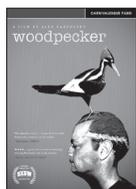
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knowing that their parents are in agreement). Volume two, *Creating a Healthy Life for Your Child*, looks at caring for children at different stages of life (from toddlerhood through adolescence), age-appropriate communication, listening and asking questions, observing a child's behavior for signs of stress, and knowing when to seek professional help. A section on dating also offers cautionary tips for integrating potential new partners into family situations. Emphasizing that children need reassurance, stability, and predictable routines in their home lives, this fine series offers plenty of good advice while also presenting single parenthood as a rewarding opportunity. Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (*M. Puffer-Rothenberg*)

## RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY

### Mechanical Love ★★★

(2007) 52 min. DVD: \$390. Icarus Films. PPR.

Danish filmmaker Phie Ambo's *Mechanical Love* takes viewers into the world of robotics for a thought-provoking glimpse at the kinds of relationships humans can form with machines. To Mrs. Körner, a nursing home resident in Germany, her furry robotic seal Paro is superior to a live animal, because she can turn it off and on, yet the creature still responds to stimuli and provides some much-needed companionship. Körner enthuses, "It doesn't matter whether it's real. This is even better." Unfortunately, her fellow residents find Paro's whimpering irritating and her attendants aren't convinced that an imitation pet is such a great idea. But Japanese inventor Dr. Takanori Shibata thinks of his creation

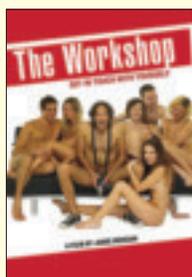
Paro as a therapeutic robot. *Mechanical Love* alternates between Körner, Shibata, and Osaka University's Dr. Hiroshi Ishiguro, who has created a series of "geminoids"—androids resembling specific individuals—including amazingly lifelike doppelgängers of himself and his daughter Lisa. When Lisa meets her geminoid, she acknowledges the similarity, but also admits, "I'm scared." Clearly, human androids will need to evolve further before being able to provide as much comfort as the new animal robots, but *Mechanical Love* effectively raises that possibility in a film that may be nonfiction, but feels as if it could have sprung from the minds of sci-fi scribes Philip K. Dick or Brian Aldiss. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (*K. Fennessy*)

## BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

### I Can Be a Veterinarian or Work with Animals ★★★

(2008) 28 min. DVD: \$19.95. Dynamic Digital Pictures. PPR. ISBN: 978-0-615-29413-1.

Sporting the tagline, "Whatever you can dream, you can be!", this practical program looks at careers with animals. Hosted by an energetic teen, each segment spotlights an animal-related job, offering a day-in-the-life perspective through interviews and on-location footage. First, a vet takes viewers through a typical dog checkup and discusses spaying (scenes of a dog being operated on may be disturbing for younger or more sensitive viewers, although the material is tastefully shot). Next, we meet students who talk about their studies at a veterinarian school, after which zoo careers



### The Workshop ★★★

(2007) 93 min. DVD: \$26.98 (avail. from most distributors); \$129 w/PPR: public libraries; \$249 w/PPR: colleges & universities (avail. w/PPR from www.alivemindeducation.com). Alive Mind.

Feeling restless and unsatisfied, British photographer Jamie Morgan journeys to the San Francisco Bay Area to attend 72-year-old Paul Lowe's "radical self-help workshop," a 10-day sex-oriented retreat. Morgan interviews other attendees and openly films group therapy sessions and even an orgy, which begs the obvious question of whether the participants are simply indifferent, narcissistic, or genuinely hopeful that viewers will learn something from their journey of self-discovery (interestingly, several are British citizens or expatriates, like Morgan and Lowe). Not only do the interviewees confess their innermost thoughts on camera, they're also naked much of the time, which is part of Lowe's process, since it renders everyone equal—at least in the strictly materialistic sense. In short order, the bashful become downright exhibitionistic, rendering the documentary quasi-pornographic (including the aforementioned orgy scenes), although nudity isn't always a prelude to sexual activity. Lowe also believes that "monogamy is not natural," and a few of the married (or otherwise attached) participants put that assertion to the test here, including the guru's son-in-law. Narcissistic or not, the breakthroughs experienced by some of the participants seem real enough, although Morgan neglects to disclose how much individuals paid for the privilege. Recommended for academic human sexuality studies, this is also a strong optional purchase for more adventurous public library collections. Aud: C, P. (*K. Fennessy*)