



# **Intensive Mothering: The Cultural Contradictions of Modern Motherhood**

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## Intensive Mothering: The Cultural Contradictions of Modern Motherhood

To celebrate the twentieth anniversary of Sharon Hays' landmark book, *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*, this collection will revisit Hays' concept of "intensive mothering" as a continuing, yet controversial representation of modern motherhood. In Hays' original work, she spoke of "intensive mothering" as primarily being conducted by mothers, centered on children's needs with methods informed by experts, which are labour-intensive and costly simply because children are entitled to this maternal investment. While respecting the important need for connection between mother and baby that is prevalent in the teachings of Attachment Theory, this collection raises into question whether an over-investment of mothers in their children's lives is as effective a mode of parenting, as being conveyed by representations of modern motherhood. In a world where independence is encouraged, why are we still engaging in "intensive motherhood?"

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